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WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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APRIL 14, 1954

PRICE 9

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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

APRIL 14, 1954 — Vol. 21, No. 46

HUMANITY LIVES IN FEAR

TO man, throughout the centuries, has fallen the role of inventor. While he has been busy with scientific progress, woman has been too occupied in ensuring the continuity of the race to interfere, beyond saying occasionally: "I hope he knows what he's doing."

Now the time has come when all women, and indeed all thoughtful men, are asking, "*Does* man know what he is doing?"

The reports of the H-bomb explosions in the Pacific have roused human beings from their passive acceptance of the experiments.

Before the second explosion, and following news of the radiation effects, the Federation of American Scientists warned: "The tests are approaching a magnitude where close control not only becomes difficult, but the effects, in fact, may become incalculable."

While the London Daily Herald acidly commented, "The Pacific is not an American lake," responsible opinion in America shared the general alarm. The Washington Post asked, "Are we going to ruin the world in the name of experimentation before it is destroyed in combat?"

On this page is a letter from a reader who expresses the general feeling of alarm.

Woman, the world over, is beginning to say: "This must stop."

If man's answer is that it is now difficult to stop, she can only reply: "You have invented many remarkable things. Surely it is not beyond your power to invent a way to save us all from destruction?"

Our cover:

● Our cover this week could be called "Study in Black and White." The girl, June Massey, well-known Sydney model, is dressed in black and white, matching the baby penguin she is holding. The picture was taken on Bowen Island, near Jervis Bay, New South Wales, by Douglass Baglin.

This week:

● There's enough fiction in this issue to keep the most voracious reader occupied for a week. It includes the lift-out novel and the first instalment of one of the most exciting serials we have published, "Cry Murder," by American writer Nancy Rutledge. As well there are four short stories instead of the usual three. One of them, "Across the Bay," by English author Margaret Bonham, is a most unusual story about a small girl. The short short story is by F. L. Green, whom readers will remember for his novel, "Odd Man Out."

● Our Fashion Patterns this week will have a special appeal for mothers. They feature children's and teenagers' fashions, and you'll find styles suitable for the young aged from four to 16.

Next week:

● Special attraction in next week's paper is an article by Marlene Dietrich, glamor grandmother of the screen. Its title is "How To Be Loved," and its wise philosophy and warm humanity will appeal to every woman.

● The lift-out novel next week is "West of Abilene," by Vingie Roe. It's a romantic Western in the authentic tradition, begins in the Lone Star Saloon with a black-clad stranger at the roulette table, and works up through the thunder of hoofs and plenty of shooting to an exciting climax.

● Color features will include two pages of glamor cats, taken at the annual show of the Federal Cat Club of Australasia. In the Homemaker Section is a page of color pictures of a lovely home in the Adelaide hills, designed like a hunting-lodge.

Letters from our readers

WHY do parents always regard their grown-up family as children? I am 21 now, and will have my first vote at the Federal elections in May, and Dad is already laying down the law about the way I am to vote. Of course, it is the way he has voted always. I think this is wrong. I feel voting is important, and I have read all I can about our Parliament and know exactly how I think I should vote, but I am not going to tell the family. It is a secret ballot after all, and, being of age now and not "a child who has no idea of what goes on at Canberra," I reckon I will go ahead and vote without telling the family and bear the ructions.

D. Rush, Perth, W.A.

A RECENT news item from Alice Springs told how cattlemen hundreds of miles apart, by sitting at their pedal radios, were able to hold a meeting, discuss mutual problems, make resolutions, and hear a report from their association's president. This is an excellent example of the great benefit radio has proved to people outback.

Mrs. M. Shaw, Nowra, N.S.W.

CARRY on with your hiking party, Mary Simpson (A.W.W., March 24) and do not worry your little head when a gossiping woman says hiking is an excuse to go out with boys. Before World War II, I was a member of a happy party who went hiking after we had attended church. You could not have found a happier or healthier-minded party anywhere. One of the boys who afterwards spent many long years in a Japanese prison camp told me when he returned that he was helped through many a day by the memories of those happy Sunday outings. So go to it, Mary, and happy days.

J. Morgan, Brisbane.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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PERTH OFFICE: 40 Stirling Street, Perth. Letters: Box 491G, G.P.O.

TASMANIA: Letters to Sydney address.

I AGREE with your editorial that the pact between the U.S.A. and Japan is a matter of the gravest concern to the world, and to Australia. Would it have happened if thousands of us had raised a protest? Let us all write to Mr. Menzies and/or the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressing our horror at the use of weapons of mass destruction. The disastrous effect of the recent test of the hydrogen bomb is sufficient to make us realise that all thought of using these weapons would be abandoned by all but inhuman monsters.

A. Hamilton, McMahon's Point, N.S.W.

IS it not high time that steeplechasing was banned in Britain? The reports we read of the recent horrible display of bloodlust (it is nothing less) at the racecourse at Aintree, England, should make all humane people feel ashamed. I suggest that a protest against this brutal so-called sport be sent to racing authorities in Britain. Signatures to an Australian petition could be collected.

John Harrison, East Melbourne, Vic.

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He knew everything about golf but nothing about love until the day he found . . .

A witch in the heather

By ROBERT MEYER

ILLUSTRATED BY DUNLOP

ANDY MacDUFF was widely regarded as the greatest amateur golfer of his time. As if that weren't enough, he was built like the statue of a Greek discus thrower, had the dark good looks of a Hollywod actor and the demeanor of a maharaja.

He was a physical culture fiend; he devoured bags of oranges, apples, and bananas. He used no alcohol or tobacco. But he did like girls, in his fashion. His fashion was to kiss them within a few minutes after he'd met them, then to leave them, thereby preserving the precious hours before midnight for sound sleep.

This, in turn, permitted him to arise early and rush to the nearest golf course, where a thought of the lady in question seldom again entered his mind. The truth is, Andy MacDuff was labelled as a 24-carat jerk until the night he took a walk in the heather with a Scottish lassie named Ella. But that's getting ahead of the story. . . .

According to insurance companies, some people are "accident-prone." According to the sports writers, Andy was "incident-prone," and most of his incidents made the newspapers. He got what is known as a bad Press. Sometimes this wasn't Andy's fault, but more often it was.

Like the time in the Los Angeles Open when he hooked a shot into the gallery and hit a woman. Andy walked into the crowd where the victim was lying on the ground. "Where'd the ball go?" he asked.

Andy's father, Bill MacDuff, came to the United States from Carnoustie, Scotland, as a young man, dead broke, and carved out one of the richest newspaper empires in the world. But while Bill was building his newspaper chain, Andy's mother spoiled the lad terribly.

The sports writers say that Andy was born with a silver putter in his mouth. From the time he was knee-high to a niblick, he had a golf club in his hands. His devotion to the game was fierce. He practised religiously, punishing himself to gain perfection. He was in the low 80's when he was only 12, and was nudging par by the time he turned 16.

Throughout high school Andy had his troubles with the human race. Boys disliked him because they thought him a rich snob. Girls swooned at the sight of him, but when he failed to take any notice of them they turned cats' tongues against him. Andy was indifferent to anyone's opinion. Actually, he was too dedicated to learning championship golf even to notice.

He mixed with boys and girls his own age only at the country club dances. He seemed to feel at ease anywhere near a fairway, and wasn't above walking a girl out on to the eighteenth green in the moonlight. But a week later the girl would be kicking herself, realising by then that Andy had no intentions of ever asking her for another date.

When Andy reached college age he talked his parents into enrolling him at a California university. He told his father that he liked its school of journalism, but Bill MacDuff wasn't fooled. He knew that the California climate permitted all-the-year-round golfing.

Andy flunked out of college in his sophomore year. He received the news of his failure on the locker-room telephone at his golf club. Academic worries thus dispelled, Andy went out for another 18 holes.

When he heard the news of Andy's flunk, Bill MacDuff wired his son to report home for a showdown. He planned to lay down the law and force Andy to start learning the newspaper business.

But Andy had a dream. He wanted to score the "Grand Slam" by winning the U.S. and British Amateur and Open championships, all four titles in the same year.

There was a three-hour scrap in the MacDuff household the night Andy got home. But with his mother on his side Andy won out. Bill MacDuff relented. He agreed to stake his son to full expense money for three years; long enough, he felt, for him to establish a solid reputation as a golfer, with or without Grand Slams.

Then, Bill insisted, the boy must start working his way through the ranks of the New York Chronicle, the biggest MacDuff paper, in preparation for taking over the reins of his news empire.

Andy agreed. With renewed fervor he resumed squeezing the sponge-rubber balls he always carried in his coat pockets, trying to strengthen his biceps and forearms. His wrists already were strong as a vice and his arms looked ready to burst right out of his T-shirts.

Andy fared well in competition that summer, winning the New York State Amateur title and finishing high in several big open tournaments against the nation's top pros. The following year he closed with a hot 66 to take third in the U.S. Open, then went on to grab runner-up spot in the U.S. Amateur.

He was picked for the U.S. team which was due to compete in England in May. Then Andy planned to enter the British Amateur Championship, scheduled for St. Andrews, Scotland, a week later.

The day before he was to sail, Andy dropped into his father's office.

"Glad you stopped in, son," Old Bill said. "I've prepared a list of names and addresses of your relatives for you. I'm cabling them news of your arrival. I figured you ought to look them up, this being your first trip to the Auld Country."

"Holy mackerel, Bill!" Andy exploded, following his boyhood habit of calling his father by his first name. "I have enough trouble with those two-foot putts without looking up relatives. When I'm not playing I plan to be practising."

"Son, you haven't learned the meaning of the word 'trouble.' I'm asking you to look the folks up as a favor to me and your mother. Why, your uncle, McDonald Hay, and your cousin, Jock Hay, live right in St. Andrews. Maybe they can give you some valuable tips on how to play the course. They tell me you have to hit a

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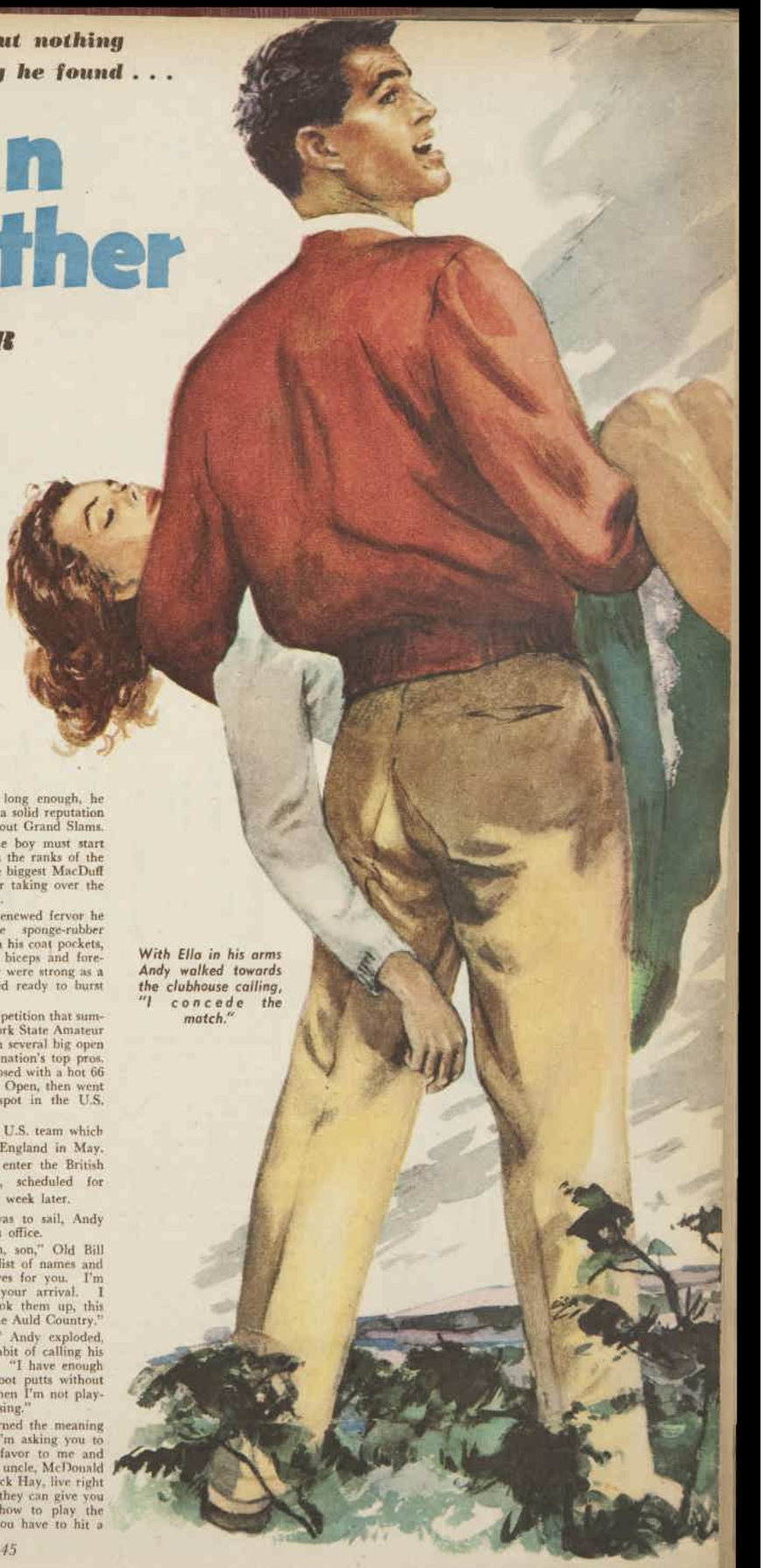

With Ella in his arms Andy walked towards the clubhouse calling, "I concede the match."

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By HARRIET FRANK, jun.

The BANCROFTS, By Half a Length

IT'S been so long ago that I'm not quite sure of my facts, but I think one year I must have paid an excess-profits tax. I must have, or I wouldn't have let Ruthie talk me into buying a house in Connecticut.

"You've got the children to think of," she began. "You can't expect to give them a good start in life in New York."

I've noticed that whenever Ruthie is bucking for something, the kids are right away all mine, as if I got them by cellular division. "What's the matter with little old New York," I said hotly.

"It's not Connecticut," Ruthie said, "and I've already found the house."

"I know," I said grimly. "Built before the Revolution, and two miles through open country to the wash-house."

"It has a little creek," she said dreamily.

"I've spent most of my life up the creek."

"Very funny."

"I'm laughing with tears in my eyes," I told her. "I like it here."

"I understand," she said honestly. "It's an exciting place. But for the kids' sake I think we ought to try to get back to the basics."

"Can I make them chop wood?"

"I'm serious, Sy. It'll be good for all of us. The way it is now, the girls think trees are something that block the view of the Chrysler Building. Living in the city is bad for them. The other day I caught Ginny sending the elevator boy out for comic books. She said her daddy would make it worth his while. Their sense of values is all cockeyed. And so is ours. In the country you don't have to compete with the birds or envy the bees. We can find out who we are and where we're going."

"Can't you covet in the country?"

"There's less chance. Life will be so simple and so good for us. We need it, Sy."

"Then I guess it's back to the land for us," I agreed, "if that's the way you want it." And Ruthie said, "You tell the girls."

"Where are they?"

"They went out to play."

"Probably shooting dice. I'll find them," I said.

I went down in the elevator. The boy gave me a big hello, and when I stepped into the foyer there was a breath of warm and perfumed air. Outside, the beat of the city caught me like the tingle of a cold shower. Right then and there I could have joined the chamber of commerce; the country was for bumpkins. Give me Lever House and Rockefeller Centre. Bird-watching might be all right for hayseeds, but, oh, the girls in their pretty winter dresses!

It was then I spotted my own womenfolk. They were pitching pennies with the doorman. "Hey, kids," I called to them, "come say good morning to your old man."

"Just a minute, Daddy. We're playing," Ginny said.

I waited on their childish pleasures. When they'd finished, they sauntered over, pocketing the loot. "We broke him," said Patty sweetly.

"You're a pair of pirates. Let's take a walk," I said.

"Haven't you got money for a cab?" demanded Ginny.

"What's this cab routine?" I said firmly. "Shanks' mare for you, my girl."

Ginny sighed. "Walking depreciates me," she said loftily.

Patty nodded in agreement. "Yes," she said, "it makes my nose turn blue."

"Listen, you two," I said, "as long as you're on the green side of twelve you'll walk."

They fell in alongside me. "Where to?" they said in chorus dismally.

"The Metropolitan Museum."

"And then Schrafft's?" asked Patty, a light of hope beginning to dawn.

"First Monet," I said, "and then malteds."

The expedition to the museum was for my own edification. I was going to prove to myself that my kids, born and bred in the city, were already impressed by its culture.

Every Saturday for the past year they had gone to a children's art class. At least they knew an abstract from a hole in the ground. Eagerly I led them through a gallery in the south wing. "There's some Greek sculpture," I said, pointing it out. "It's a wounded Amazon."

"There's a good movie on at the Music Hall," they said, quick as a flash.

"Note that Van Dyck," I persisted. This was several galleries later.

"I have to go to the washroom," said Patty.

Ginny led her away, and I sat down in front of a Rembrandt and had a long think. When they came out again, they were beaming. "Ginny's got a lot of

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"Well," said Ruthie, looking at the visitors while I poured a drink, "this is a pleasure."

ground-up soap tied up in her handkerchief," Patty said, chortling. "She took it from the washroom."

"Clever," I said coldly. "And what other tricks do you little gamins know?"

"If you jiggle the receiver in a telephone booth a lot of times, sometimes you get your money back." They looked at me, waiting to be lauded.

"Your mother's right," I said gloomily. "You're public enemies."

I herded them before me to a secluded corner and parked them side by side. Then I walked back and forth in front of them. "We're moving to the country," I said, "and you're going to ditch this gangster act and be Daddy's own sweet, unspoiled cherubs—or else."

"What have we done?" they wailed.

"All the facts are not known to me," I said darkly, "and I'd rather leave it that way."

"I'll get allergic," threatened Patty, who had a tendency towards asthma. "I'm always allergic, even in upper New York State where I go to camp in the summer when you can afford it." All this was said in one long, languishing breath.

"This is God's country," I said; "you'll feel fine."

"Will we have maid service?" Ginny asked.

"Child labor—you and your sister," I threatened.

They digested this in gloomy silence. Then they came up with the answer. "Mother must be mad at you."

"She has nothing to reproach me for," I said loftily. "Nothing at all."

"Then why do we have to move?"

"Because you two are in a rut," I said. "It's just penny pitching and petty larceny day in and day out. From now on it's early to bed and early to rise."

"What about our television programmes?"

"Sermons in stones, books in running brooks," I said, "and that's final."

The first week in August I took my vacation and we moved. Ruthie had a system. It was based on the numbers racket: numbered boxes, corresponding numbered lists. Some system!

I went to get iodine when I cut myself with some wire and found twenty-seven volumes of the Book of Knowledge. We needed cotton-wool. We went to the numbered box and got ant paste and rancid peanut butter.

By the second week in August I was back to Nature—in spades. I got so I could miss the train by two minutes instead of three. I don't know why I grouse. Missing the train was better than catching it, because there's nothing like the scent of smouldering cigars and your fellow passenger's apoplectic dissatisfaction with Walter Lippmann to set you up for the day.

By the third week in August I began signing my letters "Sy Bancroft, Esq." Ruthie started running around the place in shorts, and we put up a hammock. I shaved every other day, and we let the grass grow up high and sweet in the front yard.

I thought about building a fieldstone wall. I didn't do it; I just thought about it. Ruthie put on a little weight, and she no longer went to bed at night looking like she'd been manhandled by an auto-da-fe. Even the kids began to act like kids. Some wasps built a nest under the roof, and we had a trout in our brook. We got very happy.

About this time there was a big restoration kick on in the neighborhood. Everyone was tearing down walls and peeling off paper and finding that there was a 1670 wall behind the 1777 wall, and behind that were the remains of a log cabin.

Our house was a Victorian job with Herbert Hoover overtones, and we just left it that way. We walked around without our shoes on, and we hollered at one another when we wanted anything.

It was probably a little Lower Slobbovia, but as Ruthie said, "We're getting the gloss off us; we're finding ourselves." We'd just about got down to bedrock when the house next door was sold.

I was taking my ease under the trees when the girls came up and began to brief me. "We've got new neighbors," said Patty, "with a Cadillac."

"Do tell," I said, yawning.

"They're gorgeous," said Ginny. With Ginny, everything that isn't disgusting is gorgeous.

"If there's anything we need around here," I said, "it's a few gorgeous people."

"The man is about your age, Daddy," Ginny went on breathlessly, "but he looks a whole lot younger."

"You're too kind," I said, swatting at her. "How do you know how old he is?"

"We asked his child, which is a girl as old as me," Patty said.

"We only just met them," Ginny said.

"Their name is Jones," Patty said.

"Enough," I commanded. "Kindly confine your activities to this side of the fence."

"They're putting in a swimming-pool," Patty protested, "and we're already invited to swim in it"

"I see," I said, faintly troubled. "A swimming-pool, eh?"

"And a bar and a tennis court and a croquet field."

Patty sighed. "I bet they have all the maraschino cherries they can eat."

"Doubtless," I said. "But just remember your father is a peasant, and don't live too high off the hog."

I waited till they had scampered out of sight, and then I walked to our fence and cast a cold eye. The place was in a ferment. Moving-vans were disgorging some very free-form furniture, while the front lawn was being carefully torn up. Scaffolding was already climbing up the front of the house, and television antennas were sprouting up like mushrooms.

I ignored Ruthie's injunction against covetousness and was enjoying all this with slack-mouthed awe when the front door opened and a woman came out on to the porch. Let me state, unequivocally, that I am, first, last, and always, a monogamist. However, it was plain to see that this was, without doubt, a dish.

She was wearing some kind of tight-fitting black pants that ended below the knee. For no reason at all that I could think of, she turned and

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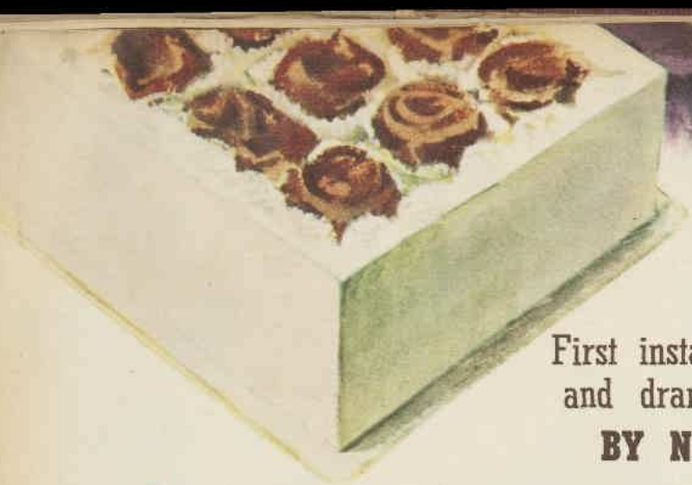

First instalment of our exciting and dramatic four-part serial

BY NANCY RUTLEDGE

CRY MURDER

THE Circe was a small theatre, as New York theatres go, its Victorian interior a bit shabby by now, in spite of yearly cleaning and refurbishing. The velvet curtains on the boxes were gone, the noses of the gilt cupids chipped; the great chandeliers had somehow lost the glitter they must have had with gaslight.

But it was a theatre of proud tradition, which it was living up to tonight. The audience stamped to their feet with bravos as the curtain fell.

This being the closing night of "Gallant Resistance," the house was packed with those who appreciated that they were seeing theatrical history made—a truly great performance given for the last time—and with the loyal admirers of Humphrey Ward, who were, of course, the same thing.

As the bent, heroic figure of Ake Ohberg, the Norwegian schoolteacher and leader of the Resistance, Humphrey had not heard the applause at all. He heard it very clearly, however, as he straightened his body, casting off Ake Ohberg for the last time.

The ovation was touching. Humphrey noted the tears that came unbidden to his eyes. Something within him rose as always to meet that most stirring of all sounds, audience applause.

Since "The Stranger" nearly ten years ago, many dramatic honors had been accorded Humphrey Ward. He himself had always known how good he was. But by now, as the culmination of his years of hard work, all but the most stupid critics knew it, too, the playwrights, the producers.

He had practically a free choice of plays, and parts, and contracts. He could close his plays, as tonight, in the end of May, for a summer's respite before starting a new play; a run-of-the-play contracts for Humphrey Ward. The theatre lay, almost literally, at his feet. Yet each time a new audience rose in stamping acclaim to his talent, the original excitement was still there.

He told himself that he felt exactly as he always felt on the closing night of a play. Sad and relieved. When the character he was playing had uttered his last words for, naturally, Humphrey did not consider that the charatcer would really live with the lesser actors who would play the part on tour—something within Humphrey died, too, some part of his life.

It was appropriate that this symbolic death should come tonight. He thought about the matter as he took his repeated curtain calls. As he stood, still smiling, cynically watching dainty Brenna Laugharn Ward, his young blond wife and leading lady, accept her big bouquet of red roses.

Death. The death of a character. The death of a play, the temporary death of the Circe, darkened for the summer. On the night when Humphrey Ward was also going to be concerned with death. With murder.

Humphrey stood with his arm around Brenna's soft little shoulder. Brenna turned her lovely young face to him. Brenna was not beautiful, but she was pretty, the prettiest girl Humphrey had ever seen.

Though it was not for her prettiness that audiences applauded her or for her acting ability. There was a sort of inner glow about Brenna, an inner friendliness that people, from waitresses to duchesses, found irresistible.

Humphrey kissed her now, to the delight of the audience. He said a few quiet intimate words as she clung to him, her eyes filled with her usual devotion and trust.

How little we human beings know of each other. My own wife, and this theatre full of people, and none of them has the faintest idea they are looking at a man who is going to commit a murder sometime in the next hour.

He thought about the box of chocolates, with its specially prepared peppermints, about the ugly-looking .32, both in the drawer of his dressing-table. The choice would depend on the circumstances of the actual moment.

Thinking of the chocolates and the gun, he longed to get on with the matter, to be past these meaningless preliminaries, these bowings and scrapings. But he knew that tonight of all nights he must be as usual. It was an essential part of his plans that everything in his own evening should be outwardly normal, calm and unruffled.

Somehow he got through the endless handshaking, the exchanges of congratulations and farewells. Nearly everybody in the world, it seemed, was backstage. Humphrey smiled until his face was stiff.

Finally, after what seemed hours, he was alone in Brenna's dressing-room with her, in accordance with their nightly custom. Only the lateness of the hour, the flowers, and the pile of telegrams made it seem different from any other night.

Brenna's dressing-room was like Brenna: dainty and aristocratic. Brenna sat before her mirror now, removing her make-up with quick pats of cream and tissue.

"Gently, my dear," Humphrey told her. "Remember to work with the muscles of the face, not against them."

Yet he was moved. He knew why Brenna was working so quickly, careless of the principles she had known since childhood. Though they had been married nearly five years, Brenna still had almost a bride's shyness about his seeing her at anything but her best.

Brenna unpinned the blond plaits that were part of her make-up. She jumped up and ran to him, still in the full-skirted blue Norwegian costume of the third act. Her tiny feet moved swiftly; she flung herself at him with the grace and abandon of a lovely child.

She said, as she did every night, anxious for his approval, "Was I all right?"

He should have told her that she had pitched the execution scene a trifle too low. But tonight he could be kind. There was no tomorrow for "Gallant Resistance." He said, "You were fine," holding her tightly, loving as always the softness, the tininess of her, the utter femininity.

Usually at this moment he felt the tensions of the evening slip away, as he knew Brenna intended them to. But tonight the real tensions of the evening were still ahead of him. Even with Brenna, he found he could not put them from his mind.

He was going over and over the details, though they were already letter-perfect. He must stay with Brenna ten minutes, just as he did every night. Nothing out of his ordinary way of doing it.

Brenna lifted her surprisingly firm chin; her blue eyes met his.

"Darling!" she said. "We have the whole summer to ourselves! Let's take a boat and sail up the coast of Maine. Let's——"

"Leave New York?" he asked, scandalised.

"Nobody stays in New York in summer but tourists!"

"I do," he reminded her stiffly. "If you want to go over to Europe and see your mother, or to California to see your father——"

"Will you come?"

"There's no reason for me to see your parents."

Brenna made a gay little face at him. "I won't leave you. If you are going to insist, like always, on staying in this humid tomb all summer, I'm going to stay with you."

Humphrey found her irreverence shocking. Next to the theatre, he loved New York. He had been born here, always lived here. The city was an integral part of him.

Suppose someone sees me going into the apartment tonight? It isn't as if I could hope to get by without recognition if someone does see me. I'm Humphrey Ward. Everybody knows Humphrey Ward. I won't go in if anybody is in the entrance or coming. No one will see me.

Brenna smiled, her friendly smile, understanding, yet brightly teasing.

"You want to stay in the city because of all those summer tourists. You're such a ham at heart that you just love to have them underfoot, wanting your autograph, snapping your picture on the avenue."

"There are certain debts one owes one's profession," he said coldly. "A gracious attitude towards the requests of the public is one of them. Just as is helping the young players learn their craft."

Brenna sobered instantly. He knew she was thinking, as he had meant her to, of the humbleness of her own position when they had met, six years ago. She had been a very nervous young ingenue then, with little but the Laugharn name, and he had paused to help her with an entrance.

Actually he had done this because her ineptness was spoiling his own lines, but Brenna had been sure that it was nothing but pure kindness on his part. Just as she was sure today that he was the wisest and kindest and most noble of men.

Brenna said softly, "Humphrey

"Oh, Mr. Ward! Would you put on it 'for Francys Maguire'?" Brenna heard the girl ask Humphrey adoringly.

——" and pressed against him, sweet and yielding and contrite.

"I was only teasing you," she said. "I'm so happy tonight. No more performances as Katla. No more make-up, no more lines, no more publicity interviews!"

Sometimes Brenna was utterly incomprehensible. That she should feel nothing at the end of so memorable an experience as playing opposite Humphrey Ward except relief that it was past!

He must have been here ten minutes. No, barely five. Humphrey was

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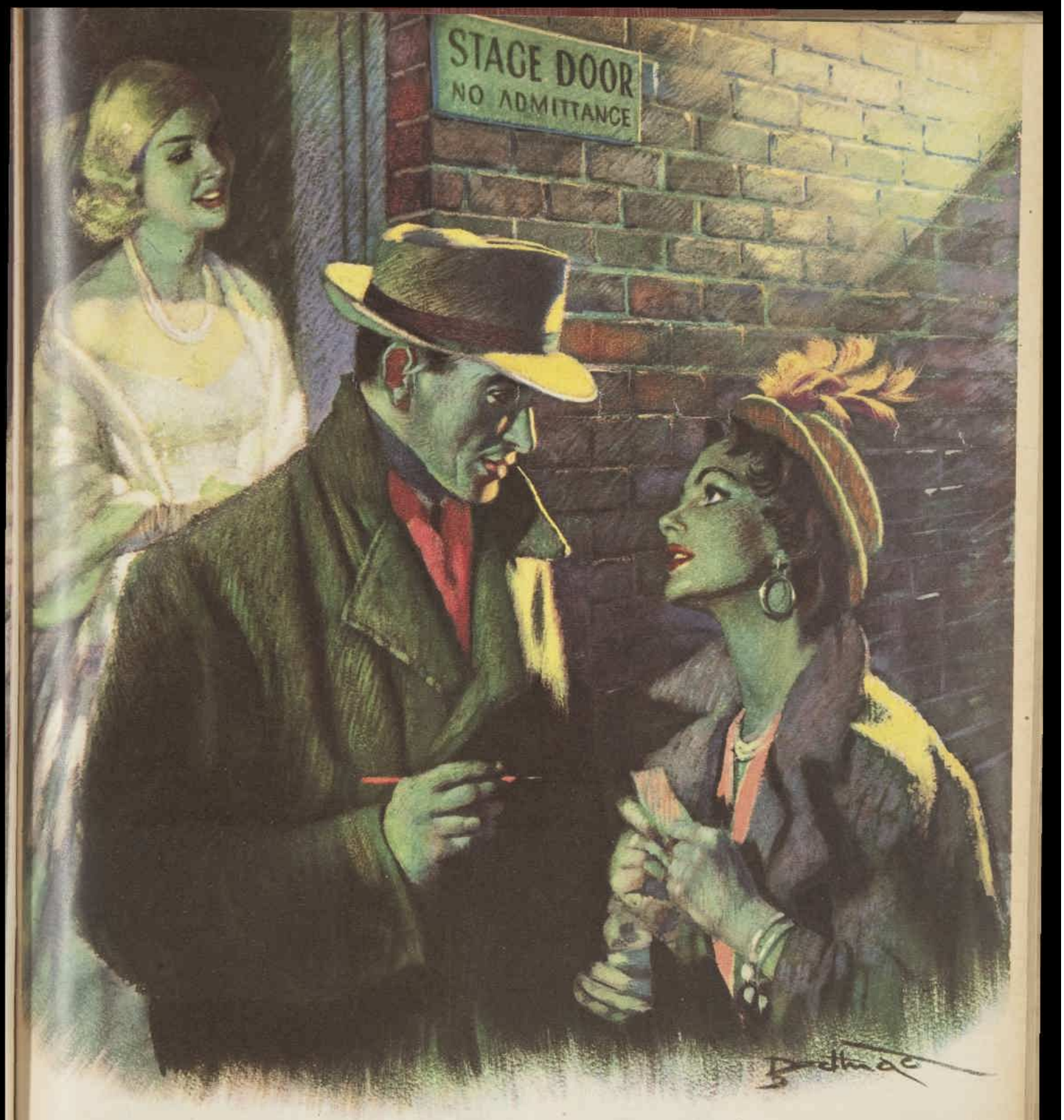

widely known as a man of custom. Countless articles in countless periodicals had related how the evening of every performance he had left his home at exactly six-fifteen. How he walked down the avenue, stopping at Pernaud's for exactly one whisky, crossing to Broadway on 57th Street, continuing on to the theatre, arriving exactly at seven-thirty.

How each evening after the performance he spent ten minutes with Brenna, reviewing the performance; another ten minutes changing, always alone in his dressing-room. Then he walked up Broadway to 57th Street, crossing to the avenue, stopping at Pernaud's for exactly one whisky, and continuing home, arriving with a regularity by which, according to the periodicals, his neighbors could set their clocks.

Tonight his life might depend on the regularity of those customs of years. They were going to be his alibi.

He realised he had been silent too long. Brenna was looking at him. He said, "We'll have a good rest, and then start rehearsals for 'The Dark Wind' the first week in September."

Humphrey saw Brenna's eyes change to an expression which he had come to dread. There was something infinitely refreshing for him in his marriage to Brenna. Something restful, yet stimulating, satisfying.

His very youthful marriage to Peg had been an affair of hot heedless passion, which had swept everything before it—reason or suitability or even career. His marriage to Brenna over twelve years later had involved careful thought on all these matters; after thirty, a man does not ignore such things as intelligence and character in marrying.

Underneath the softness, the gaiety, the youngness that was Brenna, there was the hard core of character which met and satisfied the same hard core within him. But there were times when it was rather difficult to live with, nonetheless.

When Brenna, ordinarily the sweetest and most pliable of wives, got this look in her eyes, it was a bit like living with a modern-day suffragette. And the thought occurred to Humphrey, unwanted and unbidden, that character was a most undesirable thing in a murderer's wife. That Brenna, soft sweet Brenna, with the wrong knowledge might conceivably be more dangerous to him than the entire police force.

He shivered, tightening his hold on her.

Brenna's voice was as gentle as

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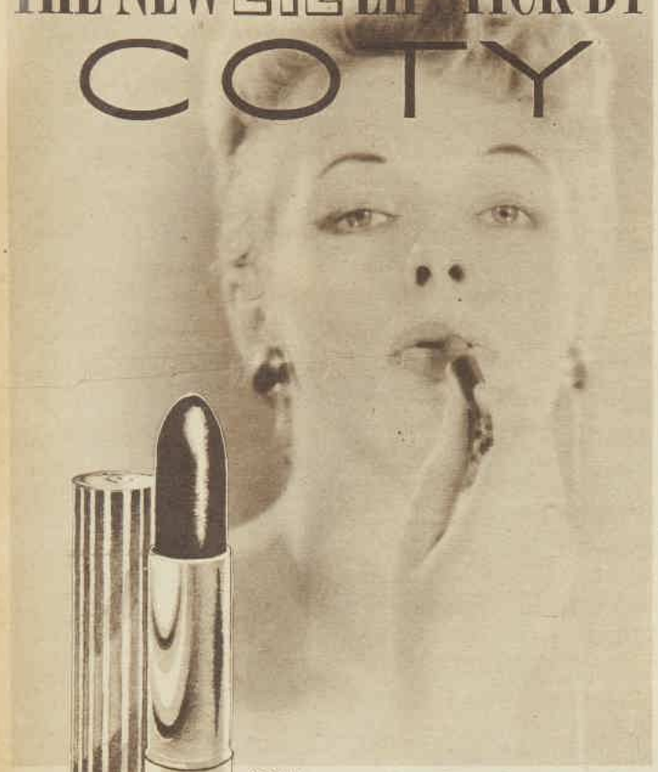
As indelible as it should be
. . . never dries the lips

THE NEW 212 LIPSTICK BY COTY



NOW you can have lips that stay soft and lovely all through the day—with never any feeling of irritating dryness or cracking . . . and with a lustrous, lasting sheen that stays on hours longer.

Coty's new, delightfully creamy lipstick is easy to apply — smooths on in one fast, fluid motion to form a flawless outline *which will not smear or "fuzz."*

Learn the secret of loveliness . . . with this new Coty lipcolour as the final mastertouch to your complete Coty make-up colour harmony. 9/6 Refill 5/6

BRILLIANT FASHION-MATCHED SHADES:

GAY FUCHSIA *(deep crimson)*
FRESH PINK *(as pink as pink)*
ROSE SATIN *(pale crimson)*
FOREST FIRE *(red-hot red)*
SPUNGOLD *(sub-tropical glow)*
GITANE *(gypsy kiss)*
RED RIBBON *(a true red red)*
DAHLIA *(heart of a crimson flower)*
VIF *(brightest flame red)*
CORAL PINK *(sunbaked pink)*

Where to test the NEW 212 COLOURS:
Go to your favourite shop. The new Coty lipstick testers are put there for you to use. Just ask. That's all.

Across the bay

"Are you enjoying the trip?" Mrs. Hand asked, inspecting Valentine with approval.

IT was a dazzling midsummer day—the motor-boat filled up quickly. People who had been grilled on the beach suddenly realised it would be cooler on the water and they scrambled in.

Mrs. Hand, who wore white buckskin shoes, was helped up the plank by a sailor, in a firm but respectful way. She found a clean space and sat down, elegantly crossing her ankles. She took out of her bag a pair of dark glasses with amethyst frames. They turned the sea to a pale glittering violet, and she looked across it to the milky hills on the other side of the bay. When they were half-way over, and the beach had receded to nothing more than a strip of embroidered yellow braid, she was still gazing over the heads of the other people into the distance. She was aloof, and they ignored her.

It was at this point that the child came and attached herself to Mrs. Hand. She simply appeared, leaning on a rail beside Mrs. Hand, and smiled tentatively. It could not be called a pick-up; the opening of conversation was left to Mrs. Hand, who, from some inner compulsion she did not recognise, found herself saying, "Hello."

"Hello," the child said, with a trace of what might have been relief. She was about twelve or thirteen. Through Mrs. Hand's glasses she seemed blackish, but their removal showed her to be only suntanned, though with a depth of pigmentation that had not been acquired in a week. Her hair was dark and straight, falling in two plaits to the level of her shoulder-blades, and she had a sad, monkeyish face and a wire across her front teeth, but her eyes were large, brilliant, and of a beautiful dark grey.

She wore shorts and a blue cotton shirt. Mrs. Hand inspected her with approval and said, "Are you enjoying the trip?"

"Yes, thank you," said the child, remotely polite. She had the air of waiting for the preliminaries to be got over, the real acquaintanceship to be established—there she stayed patiently, her arm twined round the rail. "And what's your name?" said Mrs. Hand.

"Valentine."

"Are you by yourself?" The child nodded. "So am I," Mrs. Hand said. "I'm staying with some friends, but I like going out by myself sometimes, don't you?"

"I always go out by myself," said Valentine.

"Do you? Don't your parents mind?"

"I haven't got any parents."

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Mrs. Hand. She was touched; she thought, I suppose that's why she came to talk to me. It was quite flattering. Mrs. Hand was a widow, and all her friends were about her own age, which was 53. She said, "But surely you didn't come on holiday by yourself?"

"I'm not on holiday," said Valentine. "I live here." She let out her breath; relaxing her arm, resting on her hip on the edge of the seat beside Mrs. Hand, she seemed to regard their relationship as having passed

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A complete short story by MARGARET BONHAM

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Stealing a March on May-June-July Weather!

Yes, you'll win many a point against old man winter — many an admiring glance, too, in one of the delightful new Twinsets, Cardigans, Jackets, Jumpers or Skirts in the Hanro Winter range for '54. This season, the *lambswool-finish twinset on the right, heads the popularity parade —and no wonder, it's the softest, snuggest, smartest and most sensibly priced twinset you've seen in years!

Yes, you'll steal a March on old man winter **this** year (and for years to come, too!) in

SOLD BY ALL LEADING STORES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA

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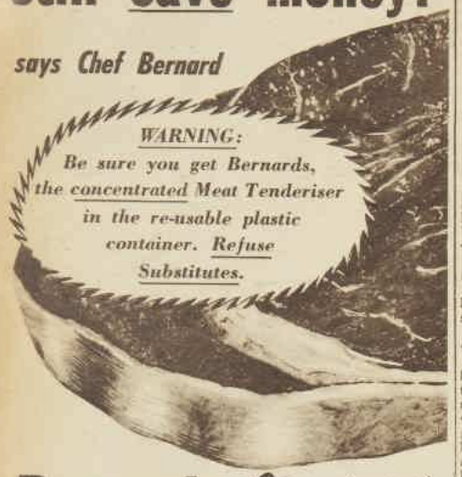
"Enjoy Steak every night and still save money!"

says Chef Bernard



Bernards *Concentrated* Meat Tenderiser Slashes Meat Bills

Stewing steak tastes like fillet when treated with Bernards, the amazing new *concentrated* Meat Tenderiser which acts in 10 *minutes*. Now you can eat more meat and still save on bills, because Bernards tenderises all meat (regardless of grade or cut).

It improves flavour, cuts down cooking time and reduces shrinkage. Bernards is made from the juice of Pawpaws and actually makes meat more easily digestible. Hospitals now use it extensively!

Blade or round steak tastes like fillet! Treated with Bernards, all steak is ready for the griller! Tenderised economy joints can be served like the most expensive roast, mutton rivals lamb and a "boiling fowl" is given the succulence of young chicken. So easy to use! With meat at room temperature fork both sides and sprinkle with Bernards (just like salt). Roasts, too, and with poultry additionally sprinkle the cavity!

WARNING: Be sure you get Bernards, the concentrated meat tenderiser, in the re-usable yellow plastic container.

Refuse Substitutes

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Bernards

Concentrated Meat Tenderiser

ACTS IN 10 MINUTES!

AT GROCERS & DELICATESSENS EVERYWHERE

Across The Bay

from page 8

through the stage of imitation, an almost cosy atmosphere succeeded it.

The shape of her features and the band on her teeth gave her smile a quality at the same time mournful and naive. Her eyes, which were now seen to have a hardly perceptible but somehow attractive squint, took on the intimate, trustful expression of one who has been adopted—a stray-dog look.

Mrs. Hand saw, but without regret, that Valentine was not to be shaken off. She was, in fact, rather pleased; the child, she thought, had character. When the boat came into the harbor of the fishing village, it was not alone, but with Valentine at her heels, that Mrs. Hand was helped ashore by the respectful sailor. The passengers charged away, romping enthusiastically, to find an olde tea shoppe or buy calomine lotion for their burns; Mrs. Hand stood coolly and let them rush off.

"It doesn't go back for an hour," said Valentine, beside her. "I usually look round. Would you like me to stay with you?"

"Do you often come here?" said Mrs. Hand.

"Oh, yes," said Valentine. "I like it. It's a nice trip," she said sedately.

"Then you'd better show me what there is to be seen."

On the quayside it was very hot. Sunlight struck upwards from the stones, and the tide-mark round the harbor wall was bleached from emerald to greenish-white. Mrs. Hand began to walk across the square and Valentine padded beside her. "You see that statue?" she said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Hand.

"It's a man who was martyred—I think he was burnt to death on the quay. I think they made the fire up with green wood and he took a long time to burn, and he was nailed . . ." Valentine watched Mrs. Hand out of the corner of her eye. Mrs. Hand shuddered.

"Suppose we look at something more pleasant," said Mrs. Hand. "Where would you like to go?" Valentine did not, as she half expected, suggest Woolworth's or an ice-cream parlor, but a church up the hill; it had, she said, a nice view of the harbor and the bay.

Mrs. Hand was drawn from her course by an antique shop—in the street's comparative gloom after the blinding light of the sea, in the cavernous dusk of the window, the mahogany and pewter and wreathed china had the lustrous sobriety of a Dutch still life. She stopped and gazed.

Valentine halted, too, perhaps obediently at the same moment, perhaps even a fraction before; the plate-glass reflected her large eyes level with Mrs. Hand's shoulder, elongated her bare legs, drew a muted glint from the band across her smile. Mrs. Hand murmured, "I cannot get past this kind of shop."

"Nor can I," said Valentine. "Isn't that shepherdess nice?"

"Dresden," said Mrs. Hand abstractedly, indifferent to shepherdesses. "I wonder if they've got any Venetian glass."

"They let you go inside and look round."

Mrs. Hand, of course, found herself opening the door; in any case, she had meant to go in. Venetian glass was an excuse—there was none in the window, and the one vase the assistant could produce was hideous, so Mrs. Hand was able to say, "Do you mind if we explore a little?"

She and Valentine pottered in companionable silence. "Oh, dear," said Mrs. Hand. "Everything's so lovely."

"I like this best," said Valentine. "Don't you?" She brought it over from a table near the window, a globe of solid grey glass with an airy white flower magically imprisoned in it. It was heavy; she carried it with care.

Continuing . . .

"It is rather nice," said Mrs. Hand. "It's a paperweight."

"Wouldn't it look marvellous on your dressing-table?"

"Would it?" said Mrs. Hand, a little taken aback. "I must say I hadn't thought of it there."

"My mother used to have one on her dressing-table," said Valentine. She turned a wistful and faintly cross-eyed gaze on Mrs. Hand, an irresistible child-to-parent regard. "I just wondered if you'd like one on yours, too," she said. "Hers was like this. But it cost a lot, I think. I expect this costs about six pounds."

Here was the assistant's cue; in no time at all Mrs. Hand was being ushered out of the shop, with the paperweight wrapped in tissue-paper, and only two pounds less in her note-case and a glow from the assurance of a bargain and the praise of her taste and acumen. She loved spending money. She said happily, "Now let's go and have some tea. Do you know a nice place?"

"There's one round the next corner."

"Then let's go there," said Mrs. Hand.

VALENTINE said awkwardly, but with a kind of dignity, "I can pay for mine. I've got one and sixpence for it."

"Well, you must spend that on something you want, and have tea with me."

"Oh, no," said Valentine, shocked.

"We won't argue now." Mrs. Hand pushed open the door, an oak one with panes of bottle glass in it, and surveyed the blackish Tudor interior, settling on a table in a dim recess, with orange cork mats but no cloth, and willow-pattern china. Mrs. Hand ordered tea, scones, and butter, and cakes. Valentine said, "Shall we look at the paperweight again?"

"If you like," said Mrs. Hand. People whose minds are made up for them by shop assistants often have moments of repentance afterwards, a sad conviction that they could have managed better by themselves. She saw regret looming up, not yet quite achieved, but inevitable; from the tissue-paper's removal would emerge proof that she had been jockeyed into a wrong buy. Left alone, she would have decided on the Bristol goblet, or the Regency inkstand, or perhaps the Victorian pin-cushion of mulberry velvet and cowrie shells. Valentine unwrapped the glass sphere and hung over it entranced. "It's lovely," she said.

"I suppose it is quite pretty," said Mrs. Hand. It had a luminous quality in the darkness of the teashop—the fragile flower, imprisoned in glass, was powdered with airy bubbles like dew. She was pitched back from regret to indecision; it might, after all, have been a good choice.

Valentine, at any rate, seemed to think so. For a few minutes she fixed it with her rapturous stare, and then her face suddenly changed, the gleam of gold vanished with her smile, the pupils of her eyes enlarged. Looking up, she appeared at the same time uncomfortable and appalled. Mrs. Hand said, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," said Valentine. She chewed the end of one of her plaits, embarrassed. The tea arrived.

"Is it cracked or something?" said Mrs. Hand, pouring out.

"Oh, no," said Valentine. "It's nice and cool in here, isn't it? They haven't got any doughnuts today. Do you like jam tarts best, or meringues?"

"I don't really mind. What did you——?"

"I like meringues, I think. We have jam tarts at school on Tuesdays, for pudding." Mrs. Hand, who had thought Valentine rather a reserved child, could not now get a word in edgeways. She listened to a feverish account of Valentine's school; the cakes on the plate dwindled and disappeared. She said, "I suppose we should be getting back to the boat."

Valentine produced a shilling and a sixpence from the pocket of her shorts and laid them silently on the table.

"No, no," said Mrs. Hand. "Put it back at once and don't be silly. You're having tea with me. I invited you."

Mrs. Hand paid the bill and Valentine followed her out of the shop. They walked down the narrow street to the quay, where the sunlight and the smell of fish hit them like simultaneous blows from a pair of large fists. On the boat they found places in a corner, and started back across the bay.

The paperweight, veiled in wrappings again, lay in Mrs. Hand's lap. She wanted to know what there was about it that had struck Valentine, but Valentine was telling her about the circus. When there was a pause, and they were well out to sea, Mrs. Hand's lips parted, but before she could put the question Valentine said, "Could I—I suppose I couldn't have another look?"

"At that?" said Mrs. Hand, touching the tissue-paper. "Yes, if you want to." She put on a casual air. Valentine took the glass globe and stared intently and frowningly into it. She said as if to herself, "There's too much light. I can't."

"Too much light for what?"

"Oh, nothing," said Valentine, again seeming suddenly embarrassed. She turned the paperweight over and peered closely at its flattened base.

"What are you looking for?" said Mrs. Hand.

"I just wondered . . . There isn't any, though. It's all right."

"Any what?"

"Are you going to put it on your dressing-table?" said Valentine anxiously.

"I might—why? Don't you want me to now?"

"I don't think it's such a good idea, really." Valentine rubbed the side of one bare foot against the toe of the other, her lashes fell, she gazed with apparent anguish at her knees. Mrs. Hand began to get exasperated. She said almost sharply, "Why not?"

"Well . . . I just thought you might not like it there if you——" Pausing, Valentine raised her extraordinary eyes, though unwillingly, to the level of Mrs. Hand's chin. She said, "I wasn't going to tell you."

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Hand in a tone of stifled ferocity. "What's the matter with the thing, what did you think you were going to find?"

"I just wondered if there was any blood on it."

"Blood?" Through her dark glasses, under the shade of her delicate hat, Mrs. Hand stared at Valentine speechlessly.

Valentine muttered, "I saw pictures in it."

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Hand uneasily.

"I did, truly. I used to see pictures in the one my mother had, only they weren't horrible pictures like—they were nice ones. I never told her in case she took it away. Once I saw someone lying on a bed with the most lovely flowers all round it. And candles."

Mrs. Hand swallowed, looking at Valentine with alarm—a psychic child, haunted with ghoulish and seemingly unrecognised premonitions. She said, "What did you see in this one?"

"It was a bit blurry," said Valentine. "There was a lady with white hair, and a man, in a cap, I think, and he picked up a glass thing like this—I expect it was this one—and knocked her down with it. I expect she was killed. He looked like a sort of burglar. That's why I wondered if there was any blood on it."

Mrs. Hand stopped herself from saying, "Of course there isn't; it probably hasn't happened yet." It was clear the child did not properly understand her own powers. She glanced at the bright globe with distaste; past or future, it was almost equally unpleasant; she felt a kind of gratitude to Valentine for saving her in time from either. "I wasn't going to tell you," Valentine said apologetically. "I thought it would spoil it for you."

"I must say it does."

"I mean, if it was used in a murder . . . But you're going to keep it, aren't you?"

Mrs. Hand shuddered. "I don't know. I don't think I really want it."

"You could take it back and change it."

"I shan't have time. I'm going home tomorrow."

"Oh," said Valentine. She glanced again at the approaching beach. She said, "Would you like me to change it for you next week? I could send the other thing on."

"No," said Mrs. Hand. She made up her mind.

"You'd better keep it," she said. "If you like you can take it back and choose something else for yourself. I've got lots of ornaments and I didn't really want it, anyway. Yes, that's what we'll do. It's a present."

Valentine went off leggily with the parcel clasped to her chest, and Mrs. Hand wondered if she had been a fool. It was a fantastic story, and after all it had been a nice paperweight; burglars would not keep her awake; she was squeamish, but not nervous. Still there was something convincing about it; she saw Valentine's horrified eyes again. It was an experience, a good tale for her friends. She went quite blithely into the hotel, rehearsing it.

. . . .

Valentine was blithe, too. She kicked open the garden gate and whistled going up the path; from on the verandah her mother called, "Val, is that you?"

"Yes," said Valentine.

"You'd better put a frock on. We're going——" Her mother appeared with a teapot. She said, "What have you got there?"

"Oh, this? It's just an old paperweight."

"Heavens, another? Where do you get these things? I really think you must be a shoplifter or something—one of these days you'll end up in a juvenile court."

"I'm not!" said Valentine; outraged artistic dignity crimsoned her face. "I don't pinch them. A lady gave it to me."

"I suppose you follow people around and hint . . . Oh, all right, but you'd better not tell your father."

Valentine went upstairs and unwrapped the paperweight. She breathed on it, polished it on a corner of the quilt, gazed rapturously at the flower in its translucent depths, and put it on top of the chest-of-drawers.

Here, displayed proudly, were five other glass paperweights. Mrs. Hand was not the first middle-aged lady to be proved squeamish. The new one went in the middle. Valentine looked at it with quiet satisfaction, all the time she was changing.

. . . .

Later that evening, groping in the outside flap of her bag for a pencil before starting to play bridge, Mrs. Hand was surprised to find a shilling and a sixpence. Valentine had principles, of a kind.

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The Moving Picture

ILLUSTRATED By HEDSTROM

Each of the three sisters had loved Bertie and they each kept a copy of his novel.

BY F. L. GREEN

WHEN the letter came, and Effie saw that it was addressed to her two sisters and herself, she opened the envelope and took out the letter.

She read no further than the first paragraph. Returning the letter to the envelope, she felt that the day's routine and the whole orderly mode of existence in the house was suddenly threatened.

Going back to the kitchen where the kettle was boiling and the toast for breakfast was ready, she put the letter on Victoria's tray and went upstairs with it.

Effie placed the tray on the table and gave her the letter.

"Read that."

"I haven't got my glasses," Victoria said. "Who is it from?"

"It's addressed to the three of us. From some company. I couldn't make head or tail of it."

"Probably an increase in gas or electricity charges," Victoria said.

Effie took up the letter. "It's something about a moving picture of a novel cousin Bertie wrote."

"Did poor Bertie ever write a novel?" Victoria said, sipping tea.

Casually, Effie said: "The letter says he did. The letter says something about purchasing the film rights to make a film of the novel."

Victoria was slow to comment on that: "Oh, I daresay it's just a trick to get money out of us."

"It says we own the copyright of the property," Effie said.

She was sixty. This was her morning to make breakfast for the household. She was a methodical woman who enjoyed domestic work, and always had done. She had a delicate passion for tidiness which extended over every aspect of her life. A tidy mind. A tidy house. And tidy personal relationships, especially.

"Oh, that's just legal clap-trap. Meddle with legal business and your money goes down the drain," Victoria said.

"I'll tear it up," Effie said.

Victoria nodded her approval. Effie thrust the letter into her apron pocket and went down to bring up Louise's tray. When she entered Louise's room, her sister's beautiful dark eyes followed her with their gaze and rested on the letter which jutted from the apron pocket.

"Is that a letter, Effie?"

"It's something about a moving picture of cousin Bertie's novel. Victoria says it's just a trick to extort money from us." Effie gave her the letter to read.

"Quite right," Louise said, handing the letter back. "It's a trick."

Cousin Bertie had died twenty years ago, and since they were his sole remaining relatives, his few possessions had passed to them.

In a pleasant, lackadaisical way, he had been a naturalist who, besides giving very successful public lectures, had written two books: "Chats on the Curlew" and "Haunts of the Storm-Petrel," which Louise had illustrated with delicate water-color paintings. Copies of the books were in the bookcase.

But his novel was not displayed there. Nor was it ever mentioned by the sisters, although each secretly possessed a copy, which was inscribed to "the inspirer of this modest romance set in the beauties of her native county."

When Effie had gone, Louise put down her cup.

"Bertie," she whispered, "some film people have come across the novel which you wrote about you and me when we were twenty. Bertie, I'd hate it if our romance was shown in cinemas. Victoria says it's just a trick to get money from us. But it isn't. It offers us two thousand pounds!

"Bertie, I know perfectly well, none better, that the money would be a god-send to the three of us here. I can't refuse, if Victoria and Effie say that the three of us should accept the offer, can I? I just can't be selfish. Oh, I hope and pray that Effie has torn up the letter."

In her bedroom, Victoria had put aside her breakfast tray.

"What a problem!" she sighed. "Poor Effie, poor Louise, they're all I have in this world. We've shared everything, for years. I can't bear to see them going without necessities. But I did want to keep for myself this one thing, that precious love."

Downstairs, Effie was watching the letter burning to ashes.

"Bang goes goodness knows how many sixpences," she murmured, unhappily. Then she began to weep.

"I'm wicked!" she cried. "I'm really wicked! I know I'll live to repent, but what could I do? I couldn't tell them. I've never told a soul in the world about Bertie and me. I couldn't bear to turn our love into—into money."

The next letter came a week later.

"The director, or whatever he is, seems anxious to come and discuss it with us," Victoria said.

"It might all come to nothing," Louise said, flatly.

"I suppose," Effie said, without looking at her sisters, "we needn't let him rush us into agreeing?"

Victoria looked at them in turn. "Well, what's to be done?"

"Since he's so anxious, the Best thing is to let the man come. I'll write to him," Victoria said.

She sent the letter next day, suggesting a suitable date.

On the day before his visit, Louise washed her hair. It was very fine and abundant and like silver.

"I wondered where you were," Victoria said, when she came upon her drying her hair.

"Well, I thought that since he is coming to tea, to-morow—"

Victoria spent all next morning arranging flowers in the drawing-room, where she had covered the worn part of the carpet with the Indian rug from her room.

She and her sisters expected a portly person accustomed to opulence. When, at a quarter to four, the bell rang, they were pleasantly surprised to find that he was a young man, obviously cultured, with charming composure and gracious manners. He was about Bertie's age when the three sisters had been vivacious young women in their father's home in the Sussex hills.

He admired the flowers which Victoria had arranged and asked her how she succeeded in cultivating such perfect blooms. He said to Effie, "What delicious scones, may I have a third?" He noticed Louise's water color paintings and asked permission to look at them. He was charmed with them. With delicate feeling, he conveyed the fact that he recognised some of them as being the scenes described in Bertie's novel.

"You are quite right," Louise said.

Then he produced an agreement.

"I'd be so grateful if you would let me purchase the film rights of your cousin's novel. It is a story which the producer and I admire tremendously. If you will give me the opportunity, I promise to do my best to make a beautiful film."

Victoria thanked him and said that she and her sisters would certainly give the matter earnest consideration and write to him soon.

Two days passed. The agreement remained prominently on the mantelpiece, but none of the sisters alluded to it until, after lunch on the third day, Victoria passed the newspaper to Effie:

"Read that bit. Listen, Louise."

Effie began aloud: "Readers of Bella Rosecourt's latest romance, 'Pompadour's Boudoir,' will be interested to hear that the film rights of this exciting novel have just been acquired by Five Cities Films for the sum of fifteen thousand pounds."

There was silence in the room.

Victoria said: "Compare that to the fee we were offered."

"We're far from being mercenary," Effie said, "but I think we should tell the director that we couldn't possibly dispose of the film rights for less than three thousand pounds."

"And . . . but the point is, suppose he refuses?" Victoria said.

"Write and ask him," Effie said.

After that, all three of them chatted, laughed, and went about their tasks as happily as they had done before the first letter.

They were convinced that he would politely refuse this exorbitant request in spite of the firm but graceful way in which Victoria conveyed it. But when his reply came and Victoria put down the letter on the table before her sisters, defeat was visible in her whole attitude.

"He agrees," she said.

It was not until the cheque had arrived and Victoria had seen to everything that they recovered their spirits. They forgot the film until they were invited to its premiere. They refused in a joint letter written by Victoria. Weeks passed.

One afternoon, it transpired that they were all going into town.

"I thought of getting a pair of shoes for myself," Victoria said.

"I must buy some paper and fresh paints," Louise murmured.

"I'm not ready yet," Effie said. "I'll get the next bus."

Singly, and without a word to one another, they visited the cinema where the film was showing. And there, on the screen, larger than life, each saw herself, heard her words, relived again the romance of love which Bertie had granted them.

They returned singly, by successive buses. Victoria had barely entered the house when Effie returned.

"I popped into the cinema and saw that film," Victoria said, casually.

"I dropped in, too," Effie said.

Coming home at that moment, Louise heard her; and turning they saw her as she discovered them.

"Oh, I've just seen Bertie's film," she said.

For one disturbing instant, all three of them seemed to question one another.

"Quite . . . moving," Victoria said, taking off her hat.

"Yes, very," Louise said.

"I'll make a cup of tea," Effie said. But when Effie brought in the tray, Victoria said:

"I'll take mine upstairs, Effie dear."

"Look at the time!" Effie said. "I'd better start preparing dinner."

Later in the evening, it cost them an effort to look at one another. The least encounter with each other in the house hurt them sharply for an instant.

For two or three weeks there was this sad constraint between them. Like everything else of their lives, they shared that, too, in equal proportions.

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Showmen follow the sun

LEFT: "The mighty young Apollo, daredevil king of strength," who claims to be the strongest man in the world, lifts a nine-stone girl with one hand to draw a crowd. This strong man is a vegetarian.

ABOVE: Using a microphone, the woman owner of the Yippee Snowy River Stampede, a Wild West show, introduces a team of roughriders, which includes a 16-year-old girl, with entertaining patter.

The sideshow men and women who follow the agricultural shows round Australia lead a far different life from that of their forebears in the tent and waggon days.

By Harold Pollock

THE pioneering sideshow men had a precarious existence. It was a case of each man for himself—and many could not stand up to the hard conditions of work and travel.

They ruined their health or went broke on the road.

Agricultural show associations tolerated them because they brought the crowds and made the turnstiles click, but they were on the whole regarded as a tough bunch, living on their wits.

Things are different now. The showmen and women belong to the Showmen's Guild of Australia, a powerful organisation with its head office in Sydney, which watches over the interests of the sideshows, their proprietors, and employees.

Officials of the guild do all the negotiating with the various show associations.

They allot the valuable space on the showgrounds, collect the ground rent from the showmen, and pay it in a lump sum to the show associations.

The guild has strict rules of practice that must be observed by members. Brawls and disputes among the showmen are now almost a thing of the past.

Many of the showmen have had their shows handed down to them by their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers.

Some of the shows on circuit today were started by pioneer showmen who barnstormed the early agricultural shows in their tents and waggons.

Today, most of the show families live in comfortable caravans equipped with electricity and washing machines. Some even have built-in showers and baths.

The life of the showmen and women has advantages that the average worker might envy.

Starting at Longreach, Queensland, at the end of April, just when winter is beginning to chill the southern States, they pitch their camps on a different Queensland showground every few days.

By the end of July they are at Cairns and Atherton in the far north.

Then they pack their equipment, worth thousands of pounds, on seven special trains and travel south again in time for the Brisbane Royal Show in August.

Like millionaire tourists the showmen escape the winter and follow the sun.

And when summer comes to Queensland the show people are happily camped on showgrounds in the cooler south.

On the whole, showmen make a good living without becoming wealthy, but some make small fortunes.

Most of the people who live this life would have no other. They do their job because they love it and take tremendous pride in their work.

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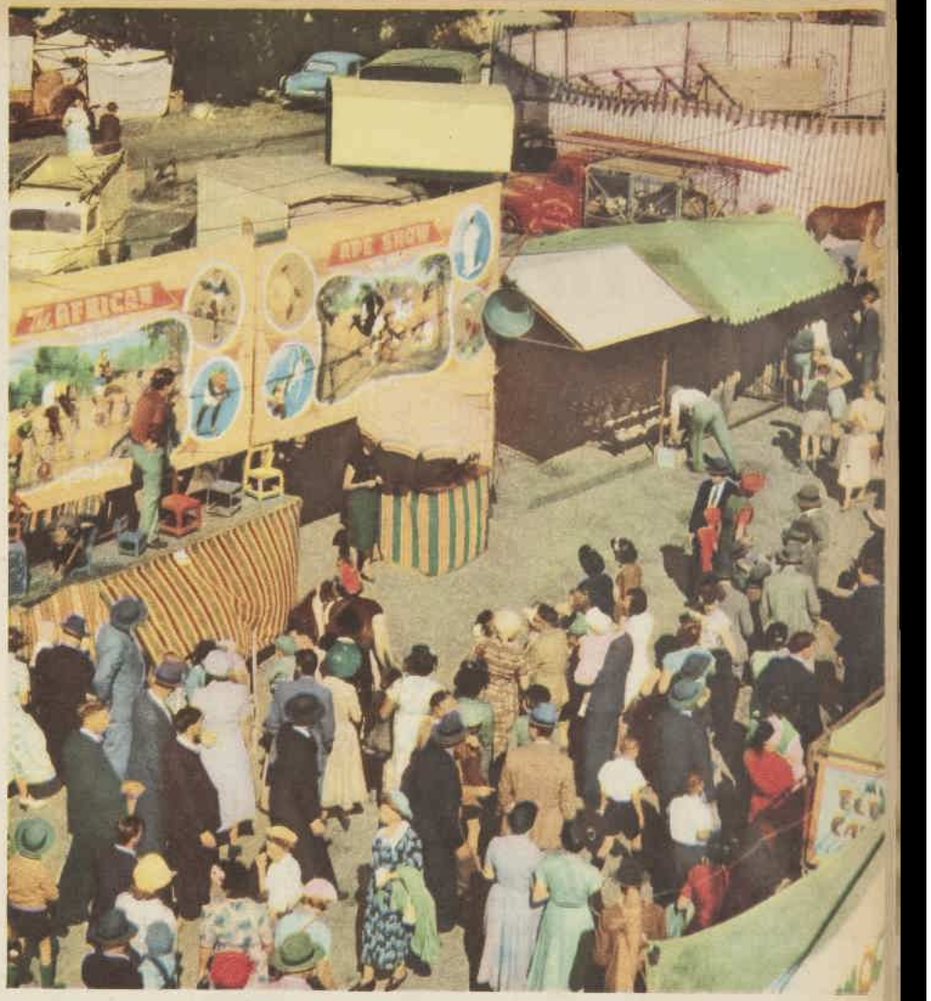

ABOVE: Mrs. A. Fitzgerald, who runs a fairy-floss stall with her husband, gives daughter Sandra a bath outside the family's caravan.

RIGHT: Pleasure-seeking crowds with money to spend flock into the sideshow alleys where they can see "the wonders of the world."

SIDESHOW FAMILY sit down to dinner in their tastefully furnished caravan. The flowers on the table are bougainvillea picked in the showground. This showman and his wife run a "knock-em" stall. Most sideshow families live in modern, well-equipped caravans. Pictures by Harold Pollock.

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES make straight for the sideshows. Here, small passengers find their idea of heaven with a ride in a rubber-tyred gig pulled by a pony. The pony is led while they "drive."

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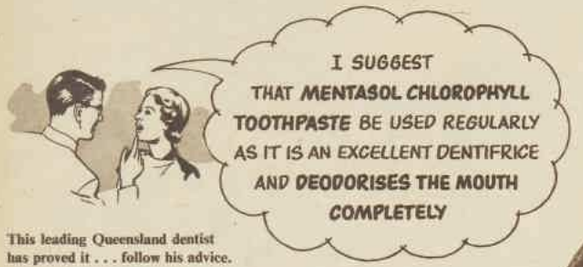
When a dentist finds MOUTH ODOUR

...here's what he does!



This leading Queensland dentist has proved it . . . follow his advice.

(Name withheld for professional reasons but original letter held in our files.)

"As a dentist I would say that the number of people with some degree of mouth odour is amazingly high. It may be caused by digestive disturbances, or things like strong foods, alcohol or tobacco. That is why I recommend Mentasol Chlorophyll Toothpaste so strongly. Not only does it clean the teeth thoroughly, but from experience in my own surgery I've found that Mentasol deodorises the mouth better than any other toothpaste, and that its effect is instantaneous and lasting."

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We're so sure you'll agree that we make this unconditional guarantee. **Mentasol will do more for you than any other dentifrice—white or chlorophyll—to give you a cleaner, fresher, healthier mouth—or your money back.**

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M.9.WW10.E

Worth Reporting

IN a sunny shed at the back of his home at Marrickville, N.S.W., 72-year-old retired sailor Mr. Frederick Woskett works with penknife and file making models of sailing ships in which he once served.

With keen eyes aiding his steady hand, he makes minute lifeboats and ladders from wood and cuts sails from thin plywood. He uses wire for rails, clock parts for wheels, shoe eyelets for ventilators, and sparkling brilliants for portholes.

The finished whole models go into glass cases in his home, or in the case of half models are framed against a painted scene of sky, clouds, and gulls. (Half models are ships in which the back is sliced flat to the canvas scenery, but in which the front appears to the viewer in full relief).

In former years Mr. Woskett spent hours making model ships to be placed in gin bottles, and even a few months ago made a small ship in a medicine bottle for his granddaughter.

All his work is done from memory.

When we visited his home to see the ships, Mr. Woskett was able to rattle off the names of fishing smacks, coasters, deep sea vessels, Royal Navy sailing ships, and battleships of World War I.

"I joined the Brilliant, a fishing smack, when I was eleven and a half," said Mr. Woskett.

"Some of the local boys went to sea when they were eight or nine. They'd knock about, give the cook a hand—that sort of thing. The Brilliant went out after herrings in the North Sea, but though I smelt herrings I never tasted one aboard. They used to feed us on fatty bacon."

Boys who went to sea at an early age soon lost any fear of going aloft to stow the tops'ls. Usually they worked barefooted, standing on foot ropes, clawing in the canvas.

He had only one fall, and that was from 40 feet up on the mast of the Sunbeam. The rigging broke his fall, and he was not seriously hurt.

When serving on the R.N. survey ship, H.M.S. Penguin, Mr. Woskett and crew put out of Sydney for New Zealand when a howling southerly buster was blowing. "Outside, it took us four hours to reef her tops'ls," he said. "When we had finished the Captain came up to us and said: 'You'll do it in ten minutes before we reach New Zealand.' As a matter of fact, we did it in less."

Men ate salt beef, pork, and corned beef, bit into bonemeal biscuits, first knocking them on the table to shake them free of weevils.

"Some of the biscuits were so hard that the men framed them as souvenirs," added Mr. Woskett.

"And, of course, we slept in hammocks, slung as close together as the Navy could get them. We ate, 10 men together, in a mess lit by one candle. That was all that we were allowed."

Our radio session:
HERE'S YOUR SONG

LISTENING TIMES
SYDNEY, 2GB, 7.15 p.m., Thursday.
MELBOURNE, 3AW, 7.15 p.m., Thursday.
MARYBOROUGH, 3CV, 7.15 p.m., Thursday.
BRISBANE, 4BH, 6.30 p.m., Thursday.
ADELAIDE, 5DN, 6.45 p.m., Thursday.
PERTH, 6IX, 6.45 p.m., Monday.
KATANNING, 6WB, 6.45 p.m., Monday.
MERREDIN, 6MD, 6.45 p.m., Monday.
BRIDGETOWN, 6BY, 6.45 p.m., Monday.
HOBART, 7HO, 7.15 p.m., Saturday.
LAUNCESTON, 7LA, 7.15 p.m., Saturday.

Gorillas sometimes dance

THE "Rovitas," a dancing team which incorporates the names of Rita and Ove Laursen, are entertaining visitors to the West End Hotel, Bombay, with sensational adagio dances, a gorilla performance, singing, and a staircase dance.

Rita Laursen, formerly Rita Phillips of Croydon Park, N.S.W., and her Danish acrobat husband used to appear in Sydney nightclubs.

Mrs. M. Hagenauer, mother of Rita Phillips, told us that the couple will also make a film in Madras.

"Rita is 25," Mrs. Hagenauer said, "has blond hair, black eyes, and an olive skin. She does most of the singing. Ove puts metal taps on his hands, stands on them, and dances up and down a staircase. As a matter of fact, he does all his dancing upside down.

"In the gorilla act he looks just like a gorilla. He has a marvellously slow way of jumping up on tables and chairs, and also makes a phone call as a gorilla."

Velveteen peace for "Killer" Caldwell

WE dropped in to a recent preview of a new dress material and discovered our host was Australia's wartime R.A.A.F. ace, Clive ("Killer") Caldwell.

The handsome, debonair Mr. Caldwell, wearing a pale grey nylon suit, told us a few facts about the dress fabric, a specially processed corduroy velveteen claimed to wear from thirty to fifty times as long as other types.

From the manufacturer's exhaustive durability tests, Mr. Caldwell calculated that if a four-year-old child dressed in trousers of the velveteen, slid continuously down a "slippery dip" every day, he would be 40 before the seat of his pants wore out.

We pointed out that in the natural course of events he would have outgrown the pants long before then.

But Mr. Caldwell had an answer to that one. He suggested the pants should be kept in the family and handed down for six generations, like "lederhosen" in Austrian peasant families.

We noted with interest that Mr. Calwell, who shot down 27½ enemy planes during the war, is now helping the vanquished enemy to build up peaceful trade.

The velveteen he sponsors comes from Germany.

* * *

A GREAT DANE which lives in a New South Wales country town has as its master one of the local hotelkeepers, who is a great believer in the use of toothbrush and paste after every meal.

It's one of the local sights to see the Great Dane's jaws being prised open and the scrubbing that follows when the owner wields toothbrush up and down in the approved manner among the great, gleaming canine teeth.

Chance to earn
One hundred guineas

If your 21st birthday falls next June you still have a chance to earn 100 guineas.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY is looking for a girl for a special modelling job. She must have her 21st birthday in June, 1954, and must be Australian-born.

The girl we choose will earn a modelling fee of 100 guineas. Ten guineas each will be paid to six other girls, selected to be photographed in color.

TO ENTER: Send us an ordinary black-and-white photograph of yourself. It can be either head and shoulders or a full-length snapshot. With it enclose your full name and address and write a short letter telling us your measurements, your coloring, whether you are single or married, and something about your job and your other interests.

Address your photograph and letter to The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 4098WW, G.P.O., Sydney, mark it "Model Quest," and post it to reach us before April 21.

We will take our own pictures of finalists before making our decision. The girls chosen will be required to produce proof of their date of birth.

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Luxury is that which completes the enjoyment of life.

It can be riches or simple pleasure, its value is the measure of joy it brings. . . .

Prestige hosiery is luxury—the finest of ultra sheer nylons, created to satisfy the eye with beauty expressed by superb craftsmanship.

Twelves, 12 denier nylons—the new aura of luxury, a tone of colour materialised by the heel and seam. **21/-** ; **Cocktail,** 15 denier nylons—with such a smart heel contour, shaped like a dainty picture frame. **21/-** ; **Chiffonette,** 15 denier nylons—dull as suede, soft and luxurious as a fur stole nestling to your face. **20/6** ; **Checkmates,** 15 denier mesh—with slightly contrasted heels and seams to accentuate the lacy appearance of these lovely ultra sheers. **19/6.** *The frock illustrated is inspired by* **Prestige** *Sil-tweed . . . . pure silk and rayon fabric.*

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Four-in-One brings out the highlights, lifts the natural shades and your spirits, too.

2. Brighten it

Four-in-One makes every dull strand glow with radiant new hair beauty as you stroke it on.

3. Condition it

At the same time, Four-in-One reconditions! Your hair looks younger, feels adorably soft.

4. Colour it

Four-in-One brings back permanent natural colour to each hair—dull, fading or greying.

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HAPPY CITIZENS . . .

JILL CHALMERS, of Manly, N.S.W., with the toy koala given to her by her workmates when she became an Australian citizen. A European by birth, Jill formerly lived in Egypt.

CORNELIS KOEDAM, from Holland, is another new citizen. He wears the badge of the Air Force Association, and served under British command in the war in the Pacific.

GERLINDE HARDEGG, aged seventeen, proudly shows her naturalisation certificate. She came from Palestine, and is now a pupil attending the Penrith High School, N.S.W.

New civic ceremony a cheerful event

By HELEN FRIZELL, staff reporter

No longer do migrants become naturalised Australian citizens at what were, to them, sometimes humdrum ceremonies conducted by a stipendiary magistrate in a police court.

Many cities and towns throughout Australia are now using a new form of civic ceremony that is a joyous occasion, usually ending in a friendly tea-party.

IN Canberra, Victoria, and South Australia, the new naturalisation ceremony is now well established. New South Wales recently held the first of these functions.

Among the strongest supporters of the new move are the organisations known in some States as the Good Neighbor Council and in others as the New Settlers' League.

The secretary of the Good Neighbor Council in Melbourne, Miss Thelma Jarrett, said: "Renouncing one's old nationality for citizenship in a new country is fraught with memories and emotion, and our council endeavors to impress the need for celebration.

"Now that the naturalisation ceremony has become a municipal affair we concentrate on making the day a joyous one.

"In addition to providing the afternoon tea at these functions we contact friends and relatives of those who are about to become Australian citizens, to fill the halls and reception-rooms and offer their congratulations.

"A member of our council sits on the official dais during the ceremony to offer encouragement to migrants as they are sworn-in.

"We mark the occasion by presenting them with little badges showing the Union Jack and the Australian flag."

Always in touch with the work of the Department of Immigration, the Good Neighbor Council representatives went to the court, when naturalisation ceremonies were held there, to offer a friendly word and a congratulatory handshake to the new citizens, as well as an invitation to afternoon tea.

"But this never seemed enough," Miss Jarrett added. "There was such an opportunity for showing more warmth in supporting the migrants in the step they had taken."

When for the first time in New South Wales Australian citizenship was conferred at a civic centre the foyer of Sydney Town Hall was used for the ceremony.

In the foyer beneath portraits of the Queen and the Duke, draped flags, and the shining crystal chandelier, 64 men and women from 12 European countries stepped forward to take Bibles in their hands, and to swear the oath of allegiance.

Holding the open Bibles, they spoke as one, following

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All Australians now

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY. Bibles in hand, migrants take the oath of allegiance at the ceremony conducted by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Hills, at Sydney Town Hall.

SUSAN FULOP, aged twenty-one, was among the new citizens who took the oath of allegiance. She formerly lived in Hungary. Her home is now at Ashfield, N.S.W.

the words of the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Hills:

"I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to her heirs and successors according to law, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Australia, and fulfil my duties as an Australian citizen."

They spoke solemnly, for the moment was solemn, and the voices in many accents were serious. Then there was silence as the Lord Mayor pronounced: "You are now Australian citizens and British subjects."

A few moments previously each new citizen had renounced his former allegiance to any foreign sovereign or State, using a new form, which, however, did not require him to renounce his nationality by name.

The Department of Immigration says the change was introduced when it was realised that "nationality to a European meant more than a political allegiance. It meant a way of life, friendship, family ties, early loves and affections. Most new Australians, while willing to renounce their political allegiances, were unwilling to renounce the land of their birth."

Mayoral robes

THE Lord Mayor, resplendent in his gold chain of office, black robes, and ermine, presented the certificate of naturalisation to each newly created citizen, and shook hands with them all.

Standing in the corner of the vestibule, I watched the faces of those being presented, and spoke later to Mrs. Kate Lewy and her husband, Manfred, who came to this country from Germany five and a half years ago.

Mrs. Lewy, expecting another child in two months, told me that her husband is a grocer in East Sydney, that she already has three children, Ronnie, Dennis, and Garry—the last two born in Australia.

"And now," she said, smiling with happiness, "my husband and I, too, are Australians."

Pretty 18-year-old Jill Chalmers, of Manly, concealed a toy koala in her handbag during the ceremony. Of European birth, she lived in Egypt until she was 12, migrated to Australia with her mother and brother, John, and now works at the Department of Immigration.

"When I came to work this morning," said Jill, "I found the koala sitting on my typewriter. There was a spray of carnations, a boomerang, and a lucky shilling, all presents from the girls I work with.

"I want to christen the koala, but haven't thought of a name for him yet. I've been wondering about Kanga, Mitzi, and Trudi—but they don't seem suitable. Perhaps he'll be christened Gregory Peck."

Jill and her brother John, who won a scholarship to The King's School, Parramatta, both became Australians at the same time, and after leaving the hall went downstairs to the basement, where long tables covered with white cloths and trails of roses held afternoon tea.

Here everyone was shaking hands, kissing, and saying "Hullo, Aussie!" or displaying the picture of the Queen given by the New Settlers' League.

Everyone spoke English—for the first 10 minutes. After that, in small groups, snatches of foreign languages could be heard as old friends talked over the ceremony.

One said to me: "I feel as if I belong now. You have no idea of the security which it gives one to be able to possess a British passport."

Among the new citizens was Mrs. Gizella Sebestyen, who only an hour before had been a Hungarian.

Dignified air

MRS. SEBESTYEN, in her sixties, had an air of great dignity. She held her naturalisation certificate in gloved hands, looked with directness at me, and said:

"From the moment I came here in 1947 I found that Australians treated me with kindness and with compassion.

CONGRATULATORY HANDSHAKE from the Lord Mayor, Ald. Hills, for Mrs. Manfred Lewy, formerly of Germany. "It is wonderful to have a British passport," migrants said.

"I am not saying that just because you are Australian.

"But I remember little things, the way people in the street came to ask if there was anything we needed, or what they could do to help.

"Once, I paused by a garden, where beautiful roses were growing close to the wall. A woman in the garden saw me admiring her flowers, came over to me and talked.

"Before I left she had cut me a bunch, which she insisted that I should take away."

One of the points which Mrs. Sebestyen noticed on arrival here was Australians' conversational preoccupation with the weather.

"European children are usually told that talking about the weather is boring. We say that everyone has eyes and may see if the day will bring rain or will be fine.

"Here, of course, it is the polite thing to discuss, and I think I have found out why.

"For it is in those first moments of conversation, when our voices speak of the weather, that we may take stock of the person to whom we are talking."

The new citizens include kindergarten teachers, ballet-dancers, draughtsmen, a schoolgirl, doctors.

Most have been in this country for more than five years, and are integrated in the community.

The young ones, especially those speaking good English and enjoying their life here, are an excellent example of that.

Footnote: I spoke to Jill Chalmers a few days after the ceremony. She told me: "As a joke and because I came from Egypt, one of the men at work has always put his head around the door first thing in the morning and called, 'Saida, Jill.'

"But when he called that out to me this morning I laughed back and said: 'You can't say that any more, for from now on it's not "saida" —it's "good-day, mate".'"

SHOWING THEIR CERTIFICATES to the Lord Mayor, Ald. Hills, are, from left, Antoni Kadylo, Mrs. Christina Osbiston, from The Hague, Holland, and Miss Clara Rosenbaum.

MRS. TATJANA BRACS, from Latvia, now has Australian citizenship. She was one of the sixty-four migrants sworn in at the first civic ceremony held at Sydney Town Hall.

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FIVE FRENCH ORIGINALS FLOWN HERE

These five Paris originals were chosen from a superb collection of autumn clothes recently shown in a fashion parade by Madame Pellier in her Sydney salon. The collection was flown direct from Paris to Australia.

DIOR'S apricot velvet dinner dress in his new street length. The dress is beltless and sleeveless and cut in a daring V-shape decolletage back and front.

LAFAURIE'S beautifully shaped evening dress is made in smoke-blue organza embroidered all over with black velvet flowers. A long black sash is caught under the bosom to tie at the back.

FATH'S waisted suit is made in black-and-white tweed with a black velvet collar. The double-breasted jacket has the new wide-at-the-top sleeve, rounded and melon-shaped, and pockets placed to the front. In Paris wool tweed is the fabric most used by day.

FATH'S slender-line black wool dress for late day is belted at the natural waistline with a black satin priest belt. The bodice-top is designed to flatter the bosom. The shaped toque is made in yellow and black feathers.

GIVENCHY'S coral-red wool velour daytime coat is cut with the new straight-falling fullness. The coat has a deep shawl collar and graceful wrap-over. Note the chic close-fitting swathed toque.

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a Marion Harper "Top Twenty" Selection

If you could buy only one new dress this season — this would be the happiest choice! Easy to see why Marion Harper selected it as one of the twenty best fashions of the year!

It's JERSEY . . . fluid, figure-conscious jersey has a star role for winter. This is "Janilaine"—a special kind of jersey that is stretch-resistant, pure soft wool and absolutely mothproof!

It's JEWELLED . . . a flash of rhinestones at the high neckline adds sophistication to the beautiful simplicity of the bodice.

It's LEROY . . . always a sure sign of a good fashion . . . "that lovely line" is lovelier than ever in "Janilaine" jersey. Retail price 9 guineas.

THIS FROCK is featured in Marion Harper's "Top Twenty" booklet — if you haven't yet seen the other nineteen wonderful fashions write for a copy now. It's free on request to Marion Harper, 110 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

IT'S *Janilaine*

PURE WOOL JERSEY STYLED WITH "THAT LOVELY LINE" BY

Leroy

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AUTUMN FASHIONS FOR THE YOUNG

● These fashions illustrate current teenage trends for autumn. Daytime suits are designed with easy-fitting youthful lines and the short-skirted party dress has embarked on a strong revival. Fur trims are news, and a white muff, seen in both short and long haired fur, is the prettiest accessory for evening. Color news: Snow-white, black with white, and lively red.

SLENDER black velvet dress (left), designed with a smooth bodice and oval neckline. The short sleeves are banded in white fur to match the barrel-shaped muff.

SHORT-SKIRTED party dress (above) is made in white moire silk with a cuffed neckline embroidered in milk-white sequins and pearls. The graceful skirt is softly gathered.

"KISS ME" is the name Givenchy calls his slender jumper-type suit (above). The jacket sits loosely on the hips, the armhole is dropped. Note boater hat.

SCHIAPARELLI'S chic tailored suit (above), made in Forstmann's worsted tweed. The cardigan-type jacket is semi-fitted with an unusual yoke-collar framed by pocket flaps diagonally placed beneath a seamless shoulder line. The beguiling hat is worn to show the hair. The model is included in the designer's American collection.

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Strips Grease instantly!

This photograph shows what happens when a greasy dinner plate is dipped in hot water and Jif. For the same shining results with your own dishes, try Jif tonight!

Made with special shaker top for economy

3,000 SPARKLING DISHES FROM ONE BOTTLE!

Only three or four shakes of Jif, the magical new liquid detergent, are all you need to wash-up after the biggest family dinner because Jif is so concentrated. In hot water, or cold, Jif gives plenty of grease-killing lather in a second or two. Even the greasiest dishes come out so starry-bright they don't need to be dried. Ask for Jif . . . one bottle washes over 3,000 dishes!

Concentrated

LIQUID DETERGENT

A LEVER BROTHERS PRODUCT

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MOTHER

"Where am I going? To a garden party at Government House, dinner and the theatre with a gentleman friend, and maybe look in at a nightclub."

SIMPLE

"Being a secretary is easy. All you have to do is to look like a girl, think like a man, and work like a dog."

It seems to me

By

Dorothy Drain

IN Senator McCarthy's home town in America somebody recently wrote out the Declaration of Independence on a piece of paper and went round asking for signatures for it.

A great many people, not recognising it, refused to sign it because they feared that its sentiments seemed subversive.

Around the same time came a piece of news from the U.S. Academy of Dramatic Art where several young students withdrew from rehearsals of "Congress of Women" by the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes.

They objected to lines in it in which a character says: "The rule which I dare to enact is that all shall be equal, and equally share all weath and enjoyments . . ."

The students who withdrew objected to the lines as pro-Communist, and eventually they were cut.

These incidents once would have seemed funny. But the humor of them nowadays is of a pretty wry kind.

One of the most skilful things the Communists have done is to instil such fear into a section of Americans that they are afraid of any expression of thought which can be construed, however remotely, as pro-Communist.

If this fear grew to the point of obsession with a big majority of people, then it could spell the death of democracy.

* * *

NEWS that there are now long-playing records available designed primarily for "background music" shows a forthright facing of modern facts.

They are records of light, familiar music, and the idea of them is that you go on talking without paying attention.

By now a couple of generations of people have come to expect a certain amount of noise in the background. There still remains a section of elderly people who feel, not unreasonably, that you cannot do two things at once, but the others are in the majority.

I belong to the intermediate class, which sees nothing odd in reading with the radio on, or even talking casually with one ear dimly comprehending a programme.

There is another section, growing in numbers, which likes a rather loud radio accompaniment to all conversation. I believe that this section will grow, and that the human race may even, in time, evolve ears entirely capable of listening to two sets of sounds at once.

Meanwhile, the "background music" is a logical development of the radio age.

* * *

A FREIGHTER, which arrived in Liverpool, England, recently, presented to the Chester Zoo an alligator they had picked up in Trinidad.

The alligator was a rather grubby specimen, and had taken to drinking gin on the voyage home.

I suppose you could call it an "old crock."

MANY residents of King's Cross, Sydney, were saddened to see the disappearance of a tailor's shop whose sign had long delighted them.

"Artistic Ladies and Gents," it read in a flowing script. True, the word "Tailor" was on the window, too, but well apart so that it appeared to bear little connection.

It seemed so appropriate to the Cross, which has always harbored artistic ladies and gents.

Nowadays there aren't as many as there used to be. Those in pegged-rent flats cling to them like limpets, and, with the effluxion of time, have stopped being artistic and raised families instead.

Their early artistic habits having precluded them from saving money to buy houses, they stay put instead of moving out to the suburbs.

Thus they make less room than formerly for the younger members of the clan.

Nevertheless, the race is a hardy one, and can still be seen flourishing in the coffee shops where, wearing exotic hair styles and camera expressions, youthful artistic ladies and gents argue long into the night.

* * *

THOUGH Gene Tierney and Aly Khan are said to be "mad about each other," and are seeing each other in Mexico City, Miss Tierney says she will not rush into marriage. She has transferred Aly's "friendship ring" to her third finger, but will not yet set a date for the wedding.

This seems wise on the whole. Sometimes the chief reason for marriage in the Hollywood-international celebrity set seems to be to establish a reason for an official parting.

* * *

IN Italy a man was charged the other day with throwing a hand-grenade at a woman who remained indifferent to his love.

He obviously accomplished something. A hand-grenade would shake anyone out of indifference.

* * *

ACTRESS Patricia Medina told reporters in London that she preferred a homely man to the handsome, heart-throb type. She cited Humphrey Bogart and Danny Kaye as homely men.

If Danny and Humphrey are homely then, speaking myself as a fan,
It seems that some of us differ on what is a homely man.
Still, it really is nice of the lady, but where, oh where is the pearl.
Who will state, for publication, he prefers a homely girl?

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Subtle shades for high fashion

Nylon Twisted Thread to give greater snag resistance

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WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

"Hollywood-Maxwell" takes a plunge!

low-cut

NEW LOW-CUT V-ETTE

MEANS THAT MORE WOMEN

THAN EVER WILL WANT

AMERICA'S MOST-ASKED-FOR BRA

"Hollywood-Maxwell" wearers and every woman who wants to be beautiful will be thrilled with the new low-cut V-Ette.

Nothing, no nothing, compares with V-Ette. Only the genuine, original whirlpool stitched cups give you the higher, rounder, firmer line American women prefer. All your favourite "Hollywood-Maxwell" bras are now available in regular and low-cut styles. You'll want **both** styles to make the most of **you.**

regular

now low-cut

Fashion low-down calls for this low-cut V-Ette. Genuine, continuous whirlpool stitch shapes this high, exquisitely feminine uplift—moulds this wide, beautiful separation.

A, B, C cups, sizes 30" to 38". In Cotton, white and pink, 22/6. In Nylon, white, pink and black, 32/6. In Broderie Anglaise, white and pink, 32/6. In Satin, B and C cups, 32" to 38", white, pink and black, 27/6.

and regular

This is the all-time favourite bra that American women prefer. It really does things for **you**. For sure, nothing has the look, the lift, the fit of V-Ette.

A, B, C cups, sizes 30" to 38". In Cotton, white and pink, 22/6. In Nylon, white and pink, 32/6. In Broderie Anglaise, white and pink, 32/6. In Satin, white, pink and navy, 27/6. In Lace, white only, 25/6.

Prices do not apply to Queensland.

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POLO BALL IN MELBOURNE. Mrs. Ken Mackay, of "Cangong," Dungog (left), Mr. Mackay, Mrs. Jim Maple-Brown, of Goulburn, and Mr. Maple-Brown admire the prancing pony which was part of the decorations at the ball given at the Royale Ballroom by the Victoria Polo Club during the Gold Cup Polo Tournament. Mrs. Mackay wore a dress of black brocade patterned in burgundy.

RECENTLY ENGAGED Judy Killen and Major John Swinton, who is Aide-de-camp to the Governor-General, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim. Judy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Killen, of Burradoo and Burellan.

SIGNING THE REGISTER. Richard Beavis and his bride, formerly Gay Browne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Browne, of Rose Bay, after their wedding at St. Mark's, Darling Point. They will live in Elizabeth Bay.

SOCIAL JOTTINGS

THE Show's on! And, as always at this time of the year, the wide-brimmed hats and deep suntans that identify country visitors are making a welcome reappearance in Sydney.

For the next fortnight, city and country folk alike will have a gay and busy round.

In the daytime, the Show takes precedence, with its parades of cattle, the ring events, and the judging. Saturday, April 17 marks the start of the Autumn Race Carnival, and the yearling sales, held on the Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of race week, will begin on April 20.

At night, gala dinners, parties, and balls will keep everyone going till the small hours.

• • •

SATURDAY, April 10, will be a big day for lots of people.

A long stream of cars will take thousands of schoolboys and their supporters up to Penrith, where the G.P.S. Regatta will be held on the Nepean River. Successful crews will be heroes-of-the-hour at a number of parties the same night. Scots College are holding a dance at the New Commodore, and Riverview's dance will be at Sherbrooke.

WHILE Regatta enthusiasts are celebrating—or commiserating with each other—on Saturday night, many country visitors will be attending the Shorthorn Society dinner at the Pickwick Club. Novel idea at the party will be about 30 pounds of choice shorthorn, roasted, and made into hot sandwiches. The shorthorn will be brought down to the city by president of the society, Jim White, of "Edenglassie," Muswellbrook. Interstate guests at the party will include Sir Rupert and Lady Clarke, of "Bolinda Vale," Clarkefield, Victoria, and Mr. and Mrs. Claude Bennett, of "Exton House," Westbury, Tasmania.

• • •

GUEST of honor at the Poll Shorthorn Society dinner at the Pickwick Club on Monday, April 12, will be Show judge George Bassingthwaighte, of "Georgina Downs," North Queensland.

CELEBRITY CONCERT. Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Macfarlan were among the audience at the opening of the 1954 Celebrity Concert Season at the Town Hall. Mrs. Macfarlan wore a dress of black quilted nylon with a fox-fur cape.

LEAVING St. Mark's, Darling Point, are Bruce Warden and his bride, formerly Helen Powell, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Powell, of "Morella," Walgett.

PRESIDENT K. Garner Mackinnon, of Dandaloo Station, Trangie, will welcome the guests, who will include Mr. and Mrs. Doug Munro, of "Gundibri," Merriwa, Mr. and Mrs. Will Stuart, of "Greenwich Park," Towrang, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Simpson, of "Gunnawarra," Gulargambone. Mrs. Simpson is a successful Poll Shorthorn exhibitor.

• • •

MEN will certainly outnumber women at the "members only" buffet dinner given by the Aberdeen Angus Society in the ballroom of the Australia Hotel. Feminine point of view will be upheld by exhibitors Mrs. M. Reid, of "Narrangullen," Yass, and Mrs. L. T. Sanderson, of "Wallah," Narrabri, who will be among guests at the dinner to be held on Monday, April 12. President of the society is H. Gordon Munro, of "Booroomooka," Bingara.

• • •

AMONG country hosts planning parties are Mr. and Mrs. Jim Ashton, of "Millamolong," Mandurama, who have asked friends for cocktails at their home in Double Bay on April 15, and the George Falkiners, of "Haddon Rig," Warren, who will give a party at the Pickwick Club on Easter Monday.

PARTIES on Tuesday, April 13, which is the last day of the cattle judging, include a dinner given at the State Ballroom by the Guernsey Cattle Association, and the Jersey Herd Society's dinner at the Hotel Sydney.

• • •

THE restaurant and ballroom of the Australia Hotel will be en fete on Tuesday, April 20, when 18 country hostesses will give the Country Matrons' Ball, one of the traditional big parties of race week. And on the same night 33 city and country hostesses will entertain at the Matrons' Ball at the Royal Sydney Golf Club.

• • •

VICTORIAN visitors making the Australia Hotel their headquarters include Mr. and Mrs. Louis Nelken, who will be among luncheon guests of the chairman of the A.J.C., Mr. Alan Potter, and Mrs. Potter on the first day of the races. Also at the Australia will be Mr. and Mrs. Tom Carlyon, and Mr. and Mrs. Graham Nathan, who are motoring to Sydney and plan to spend a few days fishing at Eden on the way.

Anne

YOUNG HOSTESS June Anderson (left) and Diane Chiplin (right) with Adrienne Penn and Ian Johnson at the party June and Diane gave to farewell Adrienne, who left for a holiday in England and the Continent last Saturday with her mother, Mrs. Ralph Doyle.

TO MARRY. Shirley White and John Wadman, who will be married in London on May 5. Shirley is daughter of the Australian High Commissioner in London, Sir Thomas White, and Lady White.

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Special Feature

Setting a Table

New ideas in napery will add glamor to meal-time in your home

By EVE GYE

BECAUSE the dining-table is the hub of the home at meal-time, the focal point of your hospitality, we publish this special section which gives you stimulating ideas in table decorations, ranging from a cheerful breakfast scheme to a romantic-looking supper set for two.

These decoration schemes were inspired by new and exclusive table linens we have collected. Some, like the braided runners and the circular cloths, are little masterpieces of modern design, and with their complementary appointments will, no doubt, be most popular.

But all the linens are attractive and all were made for you to copy.

Borrowing inspiration from the past, Rene, our fashion artist, has evolved a revolutionary new fashion in table settings with her modernised versions of the old-style runner.

Her smartly braided and fringed runners shown on page 28 and the embroidered and fringed runners illustrated in the setting on page 31 were specially made in color for the cottage table.

To prove that the old-fashioned runner still has a place in the sun, we used a pair to highlight the terrace setting illustrated on page 35.

Crisp, white runners like these offer a refreshing change from place-mats and look their best on glass-topped or painted tables.

They are quickly laundered and are much easier than place-mats to iron. They can be tinted or dyed to match or contrast with your china and glass.

In countless homes there are white damask cloths. Some are seldom used, others are "yellowing" their lives away in cupboards and drawers.

The two oval table settings illustrated on page 28 show what Rene did with two damask cloths, one of which had been dyed pink and the other purple. She chopped them to the shape of the tables, then decorated the edges in dramatic but simple fashion.

Rene, who loves colored cloths, says they are especially suited to the little tables in small homes and flats. Settings can be made to look pretty, colorful, and exciting—even luxurious — by using only the ordinary appointments of your home and any of the gala cloths shown in this section.

Any person with a small amount of sewing skill can make them. Simple instructions are included.

Traditional elegance was the motif of the setting for a dinner-party shown on page 35. This beautifully appointed table is highlighted by fine linen, green Bristol glass and fine old Venetian glass, silver in simple sculptured design, and a lovely centrepiece of rare white Wedgwood in the shape of a double shell filled with fruit.

The place-mats of organdie and linen in shadow applique can also be copied by the needlewoman.

Other ideas for place-mats featuring unusually smart motifs for hand embroidery are included.

Directions are also given for a pretty and easy-to-make little breakfast cloth. This is fashioned of purple-and-white checked gingham and edged with organdie. Yellow bias binding joins the two materials.

LINEN AND LACE CLOTH

(Illustrated above)

Materials: 1½yds. fine linen, 15yds. of 2½in.-wide lace insertion, 6yds. narrow tatted edging.

To Make: Cut linen lengthwise down the centre into 2 pieces. Lay one piece across the table. Cut the second piece in half (crosswise) for the ends and lay these pieces on either side, at centre point, of the piece going across the table.

Machine stitch the end pieces to the cross-piece of linen. This makes a large cross, which is the shape of the finished, lace-trimmed cloth.

Trim the ends of linen hanging over the table so that they fall 4 inches from the table top.

Now tack the insertion over the edges of the linen, commencing at the end sections and working up to the join on the centre section. Then outline the centre section, covering the join with the insertion, as shown in the picture above.

Machine the lace to the linen on the inside edges only. (The linen underneath all the lace insertion is cut away later.)

Fit the cloth on the table again. Place four plates where each setting will be, and mark out four (insertion) squares to outline the positions. Tack the insertion evenly around the squares, then machine each edge, mitring the corners.

When the machine stitching is completed, cut away all linen under the lace to within ¼in. of the stitching. Hand-finish the corners, cutting and mitring each one neatly.

On the wrong side oversew the ¼in. edges of linen and finish by hand sewing a row of tatting all round the outside edge of cloth.

***FORMAL DINNER** for four. This interesting setting features a new-style cloth of fine linen and lace made in the shape of a cross. The lace insets form place settings. A narrow edging of hand-made lace outlines the cloth. Silver, white candles, white roses, crystal, and fine china complete the ensemble. Directions for making the cloth are on this page. (Color pictures in this section by staff photographer Robert Cleland).*

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TABLE SET FOR A RICE MEAL FOR FOUR. Two brown linen runners are used on the honey-colored table. The green plates are dramatically outlined with cream embroidered coinspots and the ends of the runners are edged with matching cream bobble fringe. Polished fruit and ivy trails add to the decorative effect.

SUGGESTION FOR A SELDOM-USED WHITE DAMASK CLOTH. The old square was dyed hot pink, cut to the shape and size of an oval table, and the edge scalloped and trimmed with fringe and braid. With a charming centrepiece of red and white roses, green plates, and red wine glasses, it makes a gala dinner party setting.

WHITE DAMASK CLOTH DYED PURPLE. Cut to fit an oval table, edged with bias tape and braid, it shows the effect that can be achieved with a cottage table on a back verandah. The use of different colored plates and napkins for each setting gives carnival color to the scheme. Any homemaker could copy the idea.

Directions on page

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NEW TABLE SETTINGS

Setting a Table

● Rene, our fashion artist, designed and made these table runners and circular cloths. Though simply styled, they offer new color and pretty ideas for the small dining-room and cottage table. Complete directions for making them are given on pages 30 and 32.

RENE'S own breakfast table with an organdie-edged check gingham cloth (left) and varied pottery.

WHITE SHEETING (above) used for a petticoat cloth in a supper setting arranged by decorator Tom Gillies, of Edgecliff, N.S.W. An old chemist's bottle makes a vase. Below: Lunch for two set on a circular pink linen cloth edged with white cotton fringe and rick-rack braid. A wine jug is used as the centrepiece.

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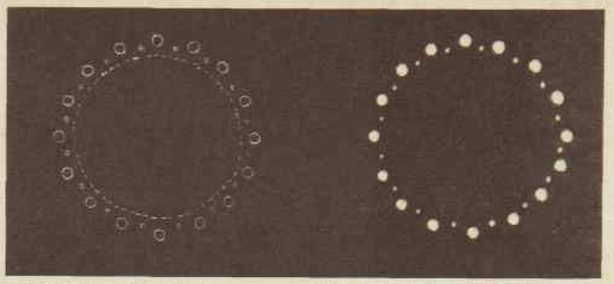
PLS-54

Make these new linens

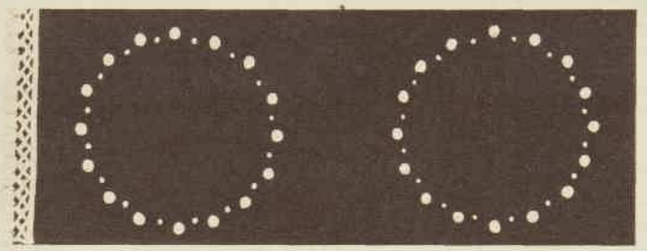


FINISHED bobble-fringed runner (below) shows how the embroidered spots outline the position of the plate. For full effect the runners should fall 2 or 3 inches over the edge of the table, as shown on page 28.

FOR THE EMBROIDERY (above) a circle of pins is used to outline the size of the plate, and coin spots are marked one inch out from the outline with white ink, or suitable marking chalk, and then embroidered.

Setting a Table

Here are the directions for making the bobble-fringed runners and the dyed damask cloths that are featured in the gala table settings shown in beautiful color on page 28.



DIRECTIONS for making attractive table napkins are also given under the picture on this page.

Bobble-fringed runners

(Illustrated left and in color on page 28)

Materials: 1yd. brown linen, 2yds. bobble fringe (or plain cotton fringing), coarse knitting cotton for embroidery.

To Make: Cut linen lengthwise down the centre, cross into 2 pieces. Turn under an inch either side and hand sew a hem. Sew the fringing across the ends of each runner. For the coin-spot embroidery place the runners across the table and plates where they would be set. Mark the shape of the plates with a row of pins. One inch out from the pins, outline with white ink or suitable marking chalk the spots for embroidery. Satin-stitch the spots with knitting cotton to match the fringing.

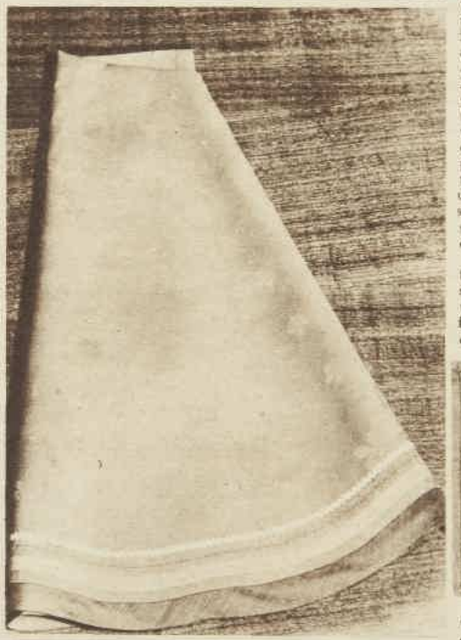
These runners were made for a table 33in. wide, but the size can be altered to fit any table. The runners need to fall only 2in. or 3in. over the edge of the table.

Scalloped cloth

(Illustrated below and featured in color on page 28)

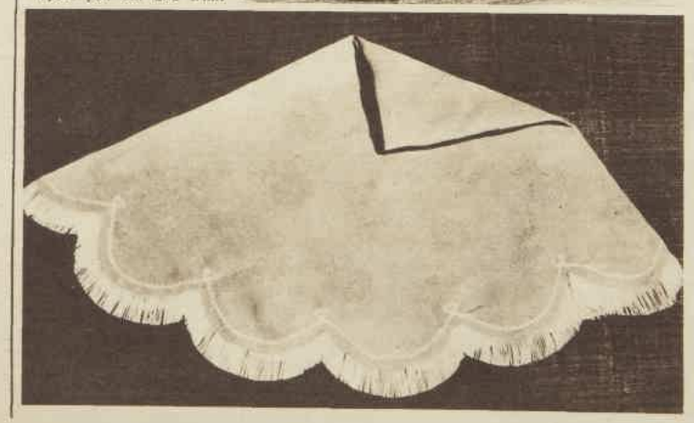
THIS was a white damask cloth which was dyed "hot" pink and cut into an oval to fall six inches over the table edge.

For the scallops round the edge, fold cloth over twice, first lengthwise, then crosswise so that the edges meet in four thicknesses. Using a soup plate as an outline, mark out the scallops with pencil, then cut through the four thicknesses. Turn in the edges of the scallops and tack on fringing. Sew firmly with two rows of machine-stitching. Complete the cloth by machining a row of white rick-rack braid above the fringe and loop the braid at the top of each scallop.



DYED DAMASK CLOTHS. Before attempting to trim dyed damask cloths as shown at right and below, be certain that you have used a fast dye. Test the dye by washing in the ordinary way, then starch and iron before you cut and trim.

TABLE NAPKINS of good quality are expensive to buy but are easy to make. Cut a yard of material into four squares, hem each square with tacking thread, and have them hemstitched as shown above.



Purple oval cloth

(Illustrated above left and in color on page 28)

HERE again is a white damask cloth dyed purple and cut to the shape and size of an oval table with an overhang of 6 inches round the table edge.

The cloth is finished with a row of wide green bias tape sewn round the edge. Just above this a row of narrow bright pink bias tape is sewn, then at ⅛in. intervals again a row of green and a row of yellow rick-rack braid are sewn.

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TWO RUNNERS crossed on a table make a new and unusual setting for four. In this setting, designed by Rene, our fashion artist, the runners of chartreuse linen are outlined with white rick-rack braid. The plate, candlesticks, and flower centre places are also outlined with rick-rack, and the edges of the runners are finished with plain white cotton fringe. In the setting, white plates were used with pink linen hemstitched napkins. Color was added by green glasses, pink carnations, and pink candlesticks.

Smart table runners and novel place mats

Another original design for using table runners in a clever new way for formal or informal occasions is illustrated above. Directions for making them are on page 32. Details of the ready-to-embroider mats in cute aquatic motifs are given below.

FINE hand-embroidery is traditional for lovely table linen, and the three-piece luncheon set shown below features a new and interesting design.

An aquatic pattern in which crab, fish, seaweed, and other water motifs are artistically grouped, the design is easy to embroider and will make the simplest table setting colorful.

Sets, consisting of place mats, cup and saucer mats, and serviettes, clearly traced and ready to embroider on heavy cream Irish linen or a fine linen in shades of lemon, pink, blue, green, and white, can be obtained from our Needlework Department. See address on page 73.

Each place mat measures 17in. x 11in. The cup and saucer mat is 5in. square, and the serviette 11in. square.

Details of the varying sets available and the prices are as follows:

An eight-piece set comprising 4 place mats and 4 cup and saucer mats. Price, 15/11. Postage and registration, 2/3 extra.

Twelve-piece set of 6 place mats and 6 cup and saucer mats. Price, 18/9. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra.

Sixteen-piece set of 8 place mats and 8 cup and saucer mats. Price, 21/11. Postage and registration, 2/9 extra.

Matching serviettes are available for all the above. Price, 1/3 each, postage 4d.

When ordering please quote No. 134—luncheon set. State clearly whether heavy cream Irish linen is required or fine lemon, pink, blue, green, or white fine linen.

The embroidered set illustrated is in fine cream linen. The scalloped edges of the set are worked in silver-grey buttonhole-stitch. On the place mat the crab is worked in red stem-stitch, the fish is outlined in grey with body markings in black running-stitch, and fin and tail markings in yellow running-stitch.

The water ripples are worked in stem-stitch in shades of purple, green, and yellow, the water bubbles in green, red, blue, and purple satin-stitch.

Green and red are repeated in the stem-stitch used for the seaweed leaves and the small leaf veins are in chain-stitch.

TRACED, ready-to-embroider linen for this three-piece luncheon set can be ordered from our Needlework Department. See prices and details for ordering above.

BEAUTIFULLY styled aquatic motifs are a new and unusual design for embroidered table linen. See details above for prices, colors, and suggested embroidery stitches.

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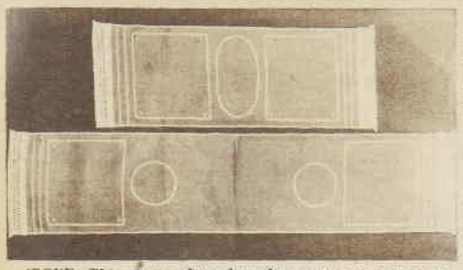
Setting a Table

Modern napery



ABOVE: This picture shows how the separate runners were marked out and braided with rick-rack braid and the ends trimmed with fringe. Below: The picture shows how the short runner is placed over the centre of the long one in the table setting.

Directions are given here for making the chartreuse runners shown in color on the opposite page and the pretty cloths illustrated in table settings on page 29.

Braided runners

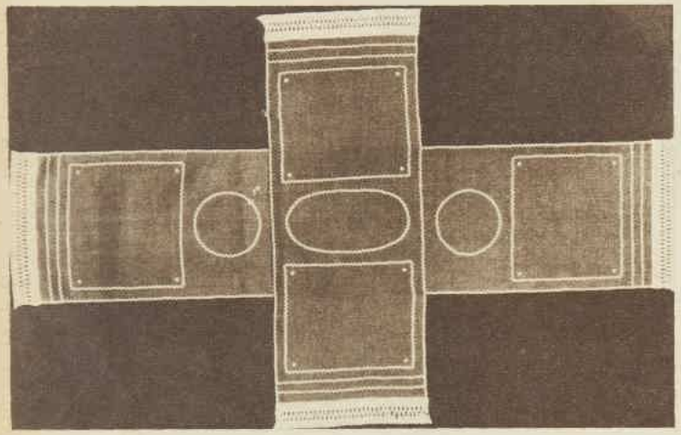
Materials: 1yd. 48in. wide furnishing linen, 18yds. rick-rack braid in a contrasting color, 1¾yds. cotton fringe to match the braid trim.

The original runners were made of chartreuse linen with white braid and fringe trim, but any preferred colors may be used.

To Make: Cut linen lengthwise into 3 strips 16in. wide. Join two strips together for the long runner that goes down the centre of the table. The shorter strip is the cross runner that goes over the centre join of the long one.

Turn under and hem the edges of the two runners and outline with rick-rack braid. Place runners in position on table, draw a square for the position of plates and outline with braid. Sew another two rows of braid just below plate positions and finish the ends of the runners with cotton fringe.

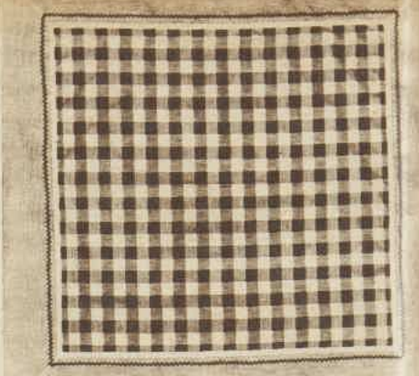
On the large runner draw two circles with a small saucer or plate and outline with braid to mark the position of candlesticks, and on the shorter runner braid an oval shape for a small flower bowl. For a final trimming embroider a small dot in satin-stitch in each corner of the plate squares.



Circular cloth

(shown in the colorful setting on page 29)

THIS is simply a circle cut 4 or 5 inches larger than the table top and edged with plain white cotton fringe, with a single row of white braid sewn an inch above the fringe. This cloth can be made to fit the particular size of any round table.



ABOVE: Breakfast - cl made of gingham and org die joined with bias bindi See directions this page.

Gingham cloth

(shown in the pretty breakfast setting on page 29)

Materials: ¾yd. check gingham, 1yd. organdie, card of ¼in. bias binding in contrasting color, 4yds. of rick-rack colored braid.

Cut the gingham into a 27in. square. Cut the organdie lengthwise into four 9in. wide strips, fold in two, and press. Sew the double organdie strips to each side of gingham with the wrong side of sewing on right side up. Mitre the corners and trim the joined organdie and gingham back to a bare ¾in. Iron the cut seams to one side and cover with a band of bias tape in a contrasting color. Trim the organdie edge with a row of brightly colored rick-ra braid, machining it about inch away from the bias ta

White petticoat clot

(shown in the table setti on page 29)

THE white sheeting pe coat cloth is just a circ like a circular skirt, but w no waist cut out of the middl and is trimmed with a self-fa round the edge. The radi of the circle required for a size table can be calculated measuring from the centre the table to the length quired for the cloth.

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Luncheon mats

Setting a Table

THIS three-piece linen luncheon set is simple but smart and very effective with its attractive embroidered design. It consists of two place-mats and a centre mat.

The set is made in cream linen and decorated with the new one-color embroidery scheme in green, but other color combinations may be used if preferred.

The complete design and a guide diagram for working the motif are given below.

Here are the materials required and directions for making:

Materials: ⅜yd. 36in. wide embroidery linen, 5 skeins Clark's "Anchor" stranded cotton, No. 770, guinin-green, 1 card bias binding to tone with fabric, No. 6 crewel needle.

To Make: Cut 2 pieces of fabric 14in. x 12in. for the place-mats and 1 piece 17in. x 12in. for the centre mat. Curve the ends of all three as shown, then trace the design, ⅜in. in from edge, at each end.

When tracing the design use good-quality greaseproof paper or artists' tracing paper and a soft black pencil. Reverse the paper and outline the tracing on the material.

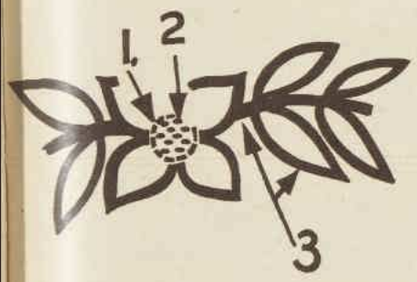
Keep reversing the paper after each tracing is made so that a clear outline is obtained.

For the embroidery use three strands of cotton throughout and follow the number diagram below for the stitches.

All parts of the motif that are similar to the numbered parts are worked in the same stitch.

The numbers indicate the stitches that should be used and are as follows: 1, stem-stitch; 2, seed-stitch; 3, satin-stitch.

When the embroidery is finished, bind the edges of the mats with bias binding, mitring all corners and sewing neatly on the underside of the mats. Finally press well.



RIGHT: Luncheon table, set for two, shows the attractive place-mats and centre mat made from three-eighths of a yard of linen.

LEFT: Diagram to follow in embroidering the set. Numbers indicate stitches to be used throughout the design.

BELOW: Full-size diagram of the embroidery design. Use this diagram to trace the design on to the table mats.

Table for the Queen

THE pretty garlanded table shown at right was photographed a few minutes before the Queen arrived to attend an official luncheon at the Returned Servicemen's Hall at Wollongong, N.S.W., during the recent Royal tour.

After the luncheon, the Queen's equerry, Viscount Althorp, congratulated the women of Wollongong who arranged the table and did the catering.

Ecru lace mounted over clover-pink organdie flouncing decorated the table. Festoons and trails of palest green ivy, specially grown for the purpose, were caught up at intervals and held in place by knots of rosebuds.

The soft pink of the flouncing was repeated in the pink cactus dahlias used with other splendid blooms on the top of the table.

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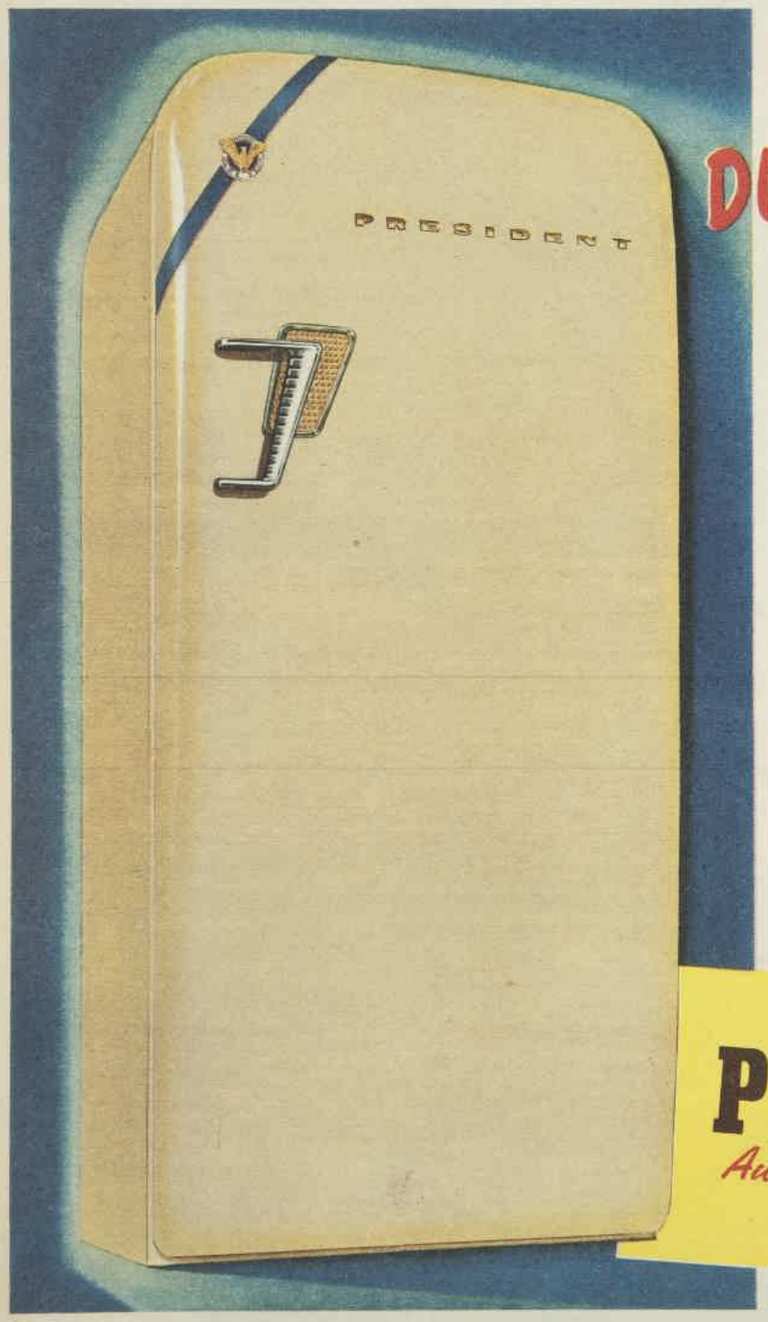

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Setting a Table

CONTRASTS IN FORMAL SETTINGS

CRISP white runners were used in this terrace setting at the Palm Beach, N.S.W., home of Mrs. Eve Gye, editor of our Homemaker Department. Below: Dinner for eight at the Point Piper, Sydney, home of Mrs. Joan Martin, well known to readers for her articles on room decor. More detailed information about these table decors and directions for making the place mats are given on page 36.

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APPLIQUED TABLE-MATS

HERE are the directions for making the attractive place-mats shown in color on page 35.

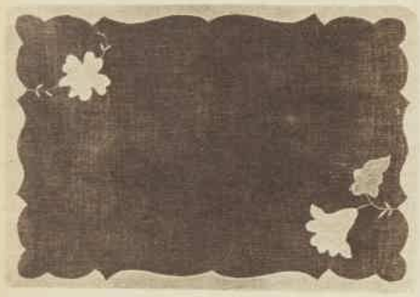
Materials: 1yd. organdie, ½yd. matching fine handkerchief linen, stranded embroidery cotton.

To Make: Cut organdie into 6 pieces, each measuring 17½in. x 12in. Cut 4 strips of linen 1½in. wide for each mat, 2 12½in. long, and 2 18in. long. From the remaining linen cut the two motifs below for the applique on each mat.

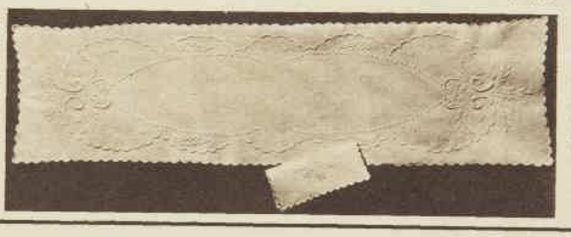
With organdie right side up and the wrong side of the linen facing the underside of the organdie, machine a very narrow seam along all sides. Press seams, turn linen over to right side of organdie. Trace a scallop or scroll edge on the linen, or, if preferred, leave a straight border. Turn in a small hem and hand sew around the edges, cutting and mitring all corners neatly.

Turn in and tack the raw edges of the flower motifs. Place in position as shown, and hand sew neatly on to mats. The stems, smaller leaves, and veins of the motifs should be worked in fine satin-stitch.

IN THIS French setting, organdie mounted over calico makes the cloth. The length of the scalloped flouncing which falls to within a few inches of the floor measures one and a half times the table's circumference and is simply gathered to the circular top. Nylon could be used instead of organdie. American hostesses are using circular nylon cloths banded with deep ruffles. They look sweet and fluffy, wash and dry quickly.



ACTUAL size of the applique flower motifs (above) which decorate the place-mat (left). Trace the motif designs on to small pieces of linen, cut to shape, allowing one-eighth of an inch on all edges for turning in. See directions this page.



ONE of a pair of old-fashioned linen runners (left) used in the terrace table scheme illustrated on page 35. Plain or fancy runners like these look their best on glass-topped or painted tables.

A white soap has NOTHING to hide—

Bedtime for baby Vittoria, pictured above with lovely mother SHELLEY WINTERS. "I always use Lux Toilet Soap" says Shelley, "it leaves my skin so smooth and soft. You'll find that pure white Lux Toilet Soap will make you lovelier." *Shelley stars in Universal International's "Saskatchewan".*

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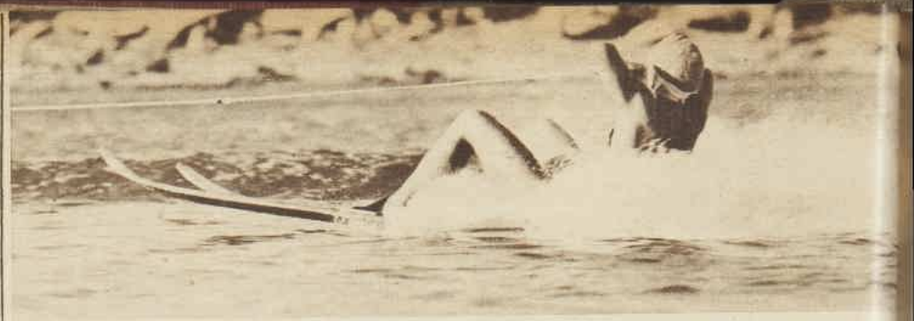

It looks easy enough

Water-ski champion likes to stunt

By SHEILA PATRICK, staff reporter

Mrs. Betty Leighton, who recently won the Australian national water-ski championship for women, says her latest and hardest stunt on water skis is the "backward swan."

BETTY, who also won the women's water-ski championship in 1953, explained to me some of her ski-ing stunts when I interviewed her at her home at Manly, N.S.W.

The backward swan was done by spinning backward on one ski, letting go the rope from your hands, and hanging on with one foot, while being towed along by the speedboat, she said.

Betty told me that water ski-ing was easy. Anyone who had no fear of the water or speed and had some idea of balance could learn to water ski in a couple of hours.

"Of course, it takes a couple of week-ends to be good enough to get on to one ski," she said. "Snow skiers pick it up very quickly. A knowledge of surfboard-riding and skating helps, too."

She had been water ski-ing for a year or so before she was able to do spins or ski backward, especially on one ski. "The backward swan, apart from jumping, is the hardest of all."

Betty said she made a women's record jump of 41 feet from a 5ft. ramp during the recent championships.

"Women are not allowed to go over a ramp any higher than five feet.

"Jumping is how you get injured sometimes. Muscles get pulled if you have a fall."

The boat tows the skiers at a speed of about 16 miles an hour, except when they are slaloming, which requires a speed of about 25 miles an hour.

"The slalom is similar to the snow slalom. The boat tows the skier at high speed past a set of flags spaced diagonally, and the skier must weave in and out between each flag," Betty said.

Skis for ordinary or spin ski-ing are 4ft. 9in. long, and for slaloming are 5ft. 6in. long. They are usually made from plywood, and they range in price from £15 to £25 a pair. Often skiers make their skis at much less cost.

Betty's husband, Ray, is also a water-ski champion. They own a white Alsatian dog called Flash, a small red sports car, and a bright blue speedboat, which they use for water ski-ing every week-end.

She and her husband run a water ski-ing club, and the members all contribute to the expenses of the boat.

"It costs a skier about £1 for a day's ski-ing," she said.

Members of the club, numbering about 10 men and women, ski either at Sackville Reach, near Windsor, or on the Manly Reservoir.

There are about 400 water-ski enthusiasts in Australia, and the number is rapidly increasing.

Betty represented Australia at the world championships in Toronto, Canada, last year, to which eight other countries sent representatives.

"Australia didn't get anywhere because the sport has been going only five years here, but we are improving all the time."

Betty said Reg Johnson, of Sydney, introduced the sport to Australia.

"He taught himself from books, then visited America, where the world champion woman water skier, Willa Maguire, gave him some lessons. Then he came home and taught us all he knew.

"Water ski-ing was a pretty tough sport, she added.

"I am always suffering from bruises and we all get water up our noses when we fall off at high speeds.

"I usually wear a nose plug."

To keep fit Betty plays badminton once a week in the summer and golf in the winter.

She is a busy housewife and gardener as well as a sportswoman.

SITTING DOWN TO IT (above), Mrs. Betty Leighton sends the spray flying as she is towed behind a speed-boat. Below, she takes a high jump over the ramp, rising high into the air on her water-skis.

BACKWARD SWAN. Mrs. Betty Leighton shows how she does her most difficult stunt. She spins backward on one ski, letting go the tow-rope, and hangs on with one foot.

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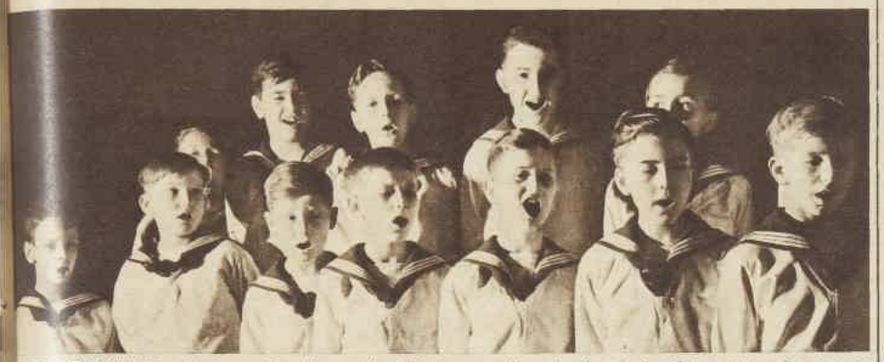
Boys to tour Australia



IN SAILOR COSTUME. Members of the Viennese Boys' Choir wear sailor suits when singing their motets and part songs at concerts. For the light operettas that are a feature of their programmes, they dress in period costumes.

Music a tradition for these choristers from Vienna

If you want to have an authentic taste of old Vienna, with its lilting waltzes and nostalgic, bitter-sweet folksongs, go to hear the Vienna Boys' Choir, which will begin its Australian tour in May.

From ROLAND PULLEN, in Paris

IN a remarkable way these boys pass on to you first-hand the rich musical tradition of Haydn, Schubert, Mozart, and Johann Strauss. For since the choir was founded by the Emperor Maximilian in 1492, most of Vienna's greatest musicians have been associated with it in some way.

Schubert sang in the choir; so did Haydn's brother Michel: Mozart composed a small opera "Bastien and Bastienne" for the choir when he was 12 years old: Clements Krauss, who now conducts the Vienna Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, was in the choir for four years.

In uniform

THERE are still pictures of Krauss in the choir's archives, wearing the toy soldier's sword and uniform which the Vienna choirboys wore at the beginning of the century.

Nowadays the boys wear sailor suits—grey ones in the Austrine and white ones for their concerts. But to perform the four gay little operas in their repertoire, they wear period costume.

One of Paris' largest theatres was packed two nights running for the last concerts the Viennese boys gave before leaving Europe for Australia.

It's hard to move a blase Paris audience because there is so much—perhaps too much entertainment in Paris. But when the Viennese boys sang, the whole audience listened, and at the end everybody went away whistling or humming tunes of old Vienna.

Whether the boys are singing their own feather-light version of "The Blue Danube" Strauss or a complex motet of the 17th century there is always perfect discipline and perfect musicianship.

Toscanini said recently they were the best young singers in the world.

The last visit of the Viennese Boys' Choir to Australia in 1939 was a sad affair. When war was declared, the conductor, Dr. Gruber, was interned as an enemy alien, and the boys could not return to Vienna.

Many of them stayed in Melbourne where they are now grown up. Some married Melbourne girls.

The first visit of the Vienna Boys' Choir to Australia in the early 'thirties was directed by Dr. Gomboz. He, too, met with misfortune. He contracted infantile paralysis and can no longer conduct or accompany the boys at the piano.

The present conductor is 30-year-old Robert Kuehbacher, whose father was a violin player in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. He told me in Paris of the astonishing discipline these boys undergo to make them the fine little artists they are.

The boys are chosen at the age of eight after an audition in which their musical aptitude and general intelligence are put through stiff tests. They live with their parents in Vienna till they are 10.

Then, if their early promise has developed, they go to live in the Augarten Palais, one of the most beautiful of Vienna's palaces, which is the choir's headquarters. There they study music for two hours a day and have ordinary schooling for five hours.

The ordinary school teaching is almost individual, for it is important that each boy cover the school curriculum in half the time of an ordinary pupil. This enables them to go on tour.

Study hard

THE 22 boys who are coming to Australia have already finished the school year that ordinary Viennese boys of their own age will not finish until next October.

With the choir will come a governess, Sister Rauschar, who has been the choirboys' "mother" for 17 years, and an English-speaking monitor who sees that the boys don't get lost, arranges transport, and settles disputes.

I saw a minor tragedy when the boys were in Paris. It was a minor tragedy for the choir, but a major tragedy for the boy concerned.

He was the No. 1 soloist when the choir arrived in Paris. During a concert, conductor Kuehbacher noticed that the boy's voice cracked up slightly on a high note. It was almost imperceptible, but it was the first sign that his voice was breaking.

To avoid risk in Australia, the boy was sent back home and a younger alternative soloist sent from Vienna in time to catch the boat to Australia.

"It was pitiful to see the boy whose voice was breaking burst into tears," Kuehbacher told me. "He had bought books about Australia and he had become a veritable encyclopaedia on your country."

What happens if other soloists reach the voice-breaking stage when they arrive in Australia? "There are always boys in the choir who can sing any part or fill any role," Mr. Kuehbacher explained.

One of the most difficult pieces in the boys' repertoire is a motet written by the modern Viennese composer Nussgruber. When I heard it, it seemed to be a mixture of the 12-tone scale of Schoenberg and the ordinary scale. Each entry and each bar seemed to have the most terrifying musical hazards. I asked Mr. Kuehbacher how on earth boys of 10 to 13 managed to sing it.

"Oh," he replied, "it's not really difficult if you understand the full tradition of vocal writing through the centuries. The boys learned it in five hours."

Sometimes in Europe the boys give 200 concerts a year. In Australia they will probably give over 50 in the capital cities and in the country. On Sundays they will sing in church in whichever city or town they are in.

Does their musical knowledge make them priggish? Not a bit.

For Viennese boys, there is a long and great musical tradition to uphold. It's as natural and important for Viennese kids to know their Schubert and their Mozart as it is for Australian kids to know Don Bradman's batting average.

THE BOYS in a scene from Johann Strauss' operetta, "Tales from the Vienna Woods." At each concert the choir performs an operetta from its wide repertoire.

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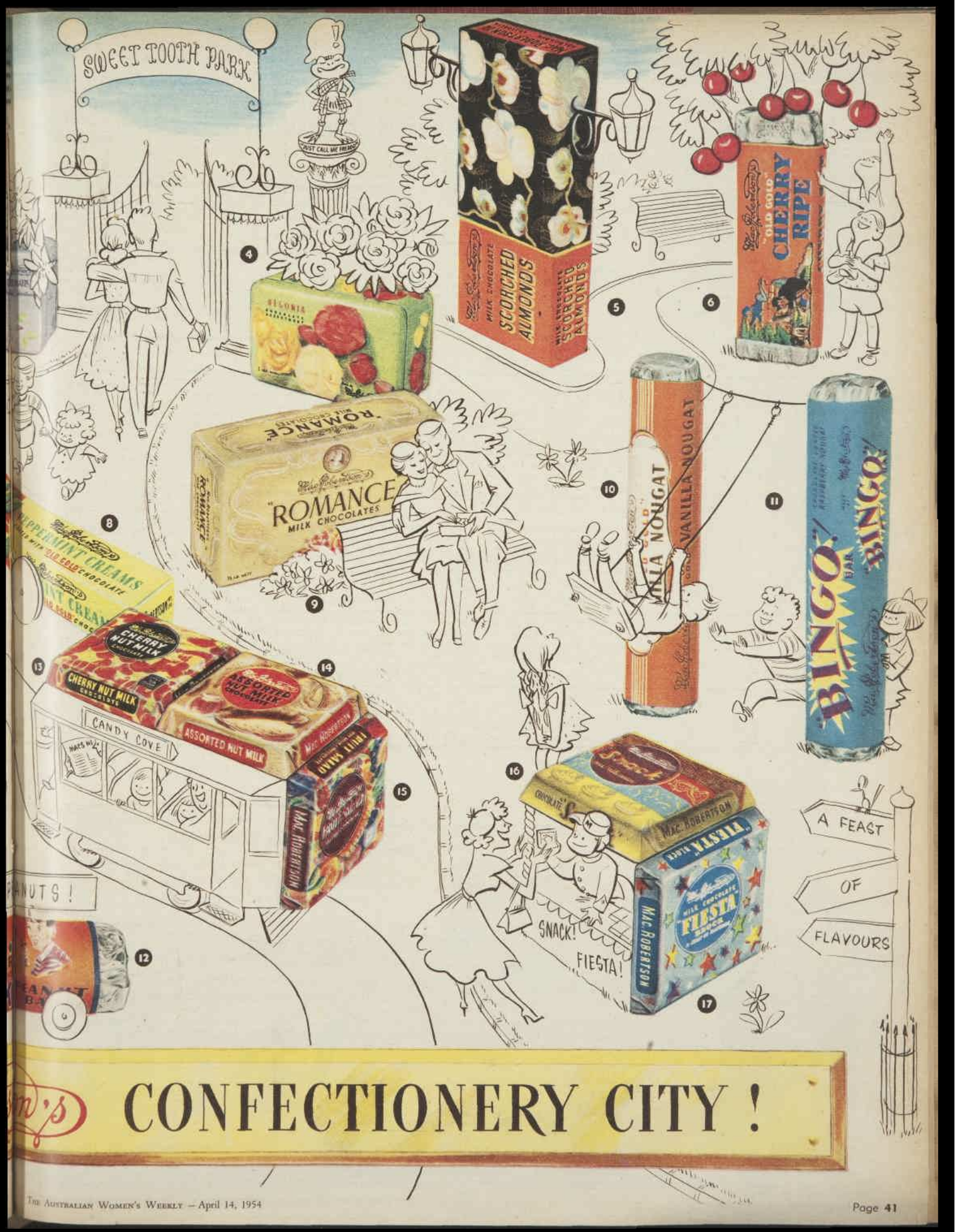

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● Here are some suggestions for a basic travel wardrobe in which separates figure strongly.

PICK one color for a travel wardrobe and vary it with contrasting color accents. Limit your luggage, because travellers often fly part of the trip, or take air trips from a basic point.

Nylon lingerie and blouses and an extra nylon dress are a good beginning point for reducing the amount and weight of luggage.

Leave the home port, whether by train, ship, or plane, in a good suit, and take a coat you can wear over this as well as over other dressier clothes. The only other coat required is a non-bulky raincoat, which often stays packed for most of the trip.

Separates to mix and match are wonderful travellers, because of the change of appearance they create.

The most practical for daytime wear is the skirt-blouse twosome.

Example: A skirt matched to a shirt-blouse top, which looks exactly like a one-piece shirt-dress, but can also be worn with a sleeveless waistcoat-type blouse or a halter blouse.

The theme has endless possibilities. See the sketch illustrating it (left). A paper pattern is obtainable for the designs, and the lines under the sketch give details of how to order.

The woman who needs more mature fashions can also use the separates idea. For the not-so-slim, a straight-cut cardigan-jacket can be added to the skirt-blouse idea, made in dark linen for hot weather and soft wool for cool weather.

Separates can again be linked with clothes to wear in the evening—and I consider they give more glamor and variety for less space than any other fashion.

For instance: A black net skirt worn with a matching sleeveless top, with a jewelled sweater, with a white organdie blouse, or with a pastel satin halter-top.

By the way, one of the most satisfactory ways to make a really well-fitting strapless top is to buy a boned strapless bra and cover it with net or lace.

The older woman will again be wise to choose separates for her evening wardrobe. She can look perfectly dressed with one well-tailored evening skirt, plus several tops. White lace, pastel lace, and chiffon would all be soft and pretty.

The decollete dress plus a jacket is another ensemble for a travel wardrobe. As every woman knows, it serves multiple purposes and occasions, and is a suitable fashion for young or old. A cashmere cardigan as an extra lightweight wrap is invaluable; so is a stole.

Take a travel-size handbag and a small evening bag.

Shoes are important and unfortunately take up quite a bit of space, but I consider the following the maximum for a shoe wardrobe:

One pair of sensible shoes with low or medium heels, sturdy enough for walking; one pair of lightweight sandals (straw is good), slightly on the big size, for tropical climates; one pair of daytime pumps; one pair of shoes suitable for deck games.

Things to note:

● In tropical ports it is not customary for European women to wear a hat.

● Shipboard fashions have become less formal since the war, but it is always wise to take one floor-length or ballerina-length "formal" for any gala occasion that might occur during the voyage, such as the captain's dinner.

● Most ships now have laundry facilities for the passengers.

● If there is a swimming-pool on the ship you will feel far happier if you take a wrap to wear walking to and from your cabin.

● It is customary for women to wear slacks or shorts on deck, and all ages follow this fashion, but in my opinion it is only for the young.

FASHION PROBLEMS

Here are some answers to readers' problems, chosen from this week's fashion mail.

"I AM writing in the hope you will advise me re the colors for my winter clothes. I want a suit in some different and fashionable shade that is suitable to wear with black accessories. I also want some other color than pastels or black for a frock to wear for dinner or a party."

Cognac, a deep rich brown, is a very new color for winter and one which could be worn with black accessories. A newly popular color range for late day and evening is nasturtium in tones from a pale soft yellow right down to strong orange.

"I WOULD be most grateful for a suggestion for style for a winter costume. The material is soft wool in a pretty wine shade. I want the jacket a bit boxy, but not flared, and the skirt straight. I have a slim figure and am quite tallish."

My design suggestion for your wool suit is a tapered cutaway (in front) jacket plus a slim skirt with a built-up waistline. Have the jacket made with bracelet-length sleeves and a small matching velvet-trimmed collar. Have a narrow belt to mark the waistline of the high-rising skirt.

"WHAT is the newest-type sweater to wear with narrow slacks? I would also like a suggestion for color."

Orange, a color that will be seen quite frequently this winter, looks wonderful in the winter sunlight and also on gloomy, grey days. A knitted slit-neck (bateau type), short-sleeved, loosely fitted sweater pulled down to hip-length is new with slim pants. Why not have orange velveteen for pants and the sweater striped in orange, white, and black?

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MORTON HERRINGS with SPAGHETTI

Use an ovenware glass dish with peeled slices of tomato. Put a layer of canned spaghetti over these (about half a breakfast cup) and add contents of one large jar MORTON HERRINGS in TOMATO SAUCE. Cover with another half cup of spaghetti, sprinkle with fine breadcrumbs, put a few knobs of butter on top and bake in oven till thoroughly hot and brown on top. This is truly delicious for breakfast or lunch—try it!

YOUTH FEATURE by Kay Melaun

The nightmare home

"Let's be like the birds and build a little nest," are the words of an old song. You may not, of course, have reached this desirable inclination, but you will sooner or later.

EVEN if you've faced the fact that you'll be lucky if you're able to start married life in a (horribly) furnished flat, nobody can stop you from dreaming.

But what about this dream house where your children will grow up and you will end your days as Darby and Joan?

Now, you don't have to take my strong opinions about house-planning and architects' and decorators' jargon too seriously, but you might consider cutting out some of the fancy titles before you get down to the blueprint.

These "areas," for instance.

You know the sort of thing: A living-room 40 x 20 with a baby grand and a radiogram up one end (music area); chairs, a fire, and books on shelves in the centre (reading area); a table and more chairs up the other end (dining area); with a five-by-five piece of convertible no man's land (play and hobbies area) waiting to be pulled down from the ceiling.

Why not have separate spaces in your house, each enclosed and devoted exclusively to one purpose?

One such space could be enclosed by partitions (walls is a chic title). This is where first two, then three, four, perhaps five, six, or even seven, eight, or more of you will sit down at least twice a day to the important family pursuit of eating.

You'd need a functional name for it. A bright one would be dining-room.

Don't have an outdoor area or a patio. Or, rather, have it, but fence it in at both ends and put a roof on it. Then call it a verandah.

You'll have a car one day. Don't give it merely a dock or a port, or whatever term has replaced a lean-to.

Give it a room of its own, devoted to no other purpose than the car; a room preferably detached from the house where the car won't shake the rafters every time you warm it up on a cold night. Call this space a garage.

In general, don't have anything that is even partly two-way. Have a bed, not a sleeping unit that erupts into chairs and breaks up into a desk, a sewing - machine, ironing-board, and free-standing drink dispensation unit.

The old idea was to make windows big to catch all the sunlight and air. What they mostly caught—if you had a view—was the worst of the weather, so that you felt you were sitting in nature's uncomfortable lap on all but perfect days, or—if you didn't have a view—a vista of the neighbors looking at you.

Besides, big windows have a chain reaction. The bigger the windows, the bigger the curtains to protect the windows; the bigger the curtains, the bigger the blinds to protect the curtains.

So have medium-size windows—preferably with shutters.

One of your problems is going to be what to do with the kids on wet days. Again, don't frustrate them with a mere area.

When you're building, scoop out a bit under the house and cement it. It will become, in time, a chamber of horrors—so suitable for children, who are morbid little beasts at the best of times. For courtesy call it the basement.

This basement will be a home for just about everything you don't want, and what'll come in handy some day, and never does—empty bottles, garden tools, the old bicycle, the wedding presents you can't give away, bundles of newspapers, picture-frames, the wood, coal, and coke, along with sentimental impedimenta like the old love letters from the boy before Tom.

Leave the basement good and gloomy. Forbid the children absolutely to go near it, and they'll make it their favorite playground.

The Kitchen: why have a small kitchen? Make it something you can walk around in sighing heavily with every step every time you think of what you gave up to get married.

And don't be misled into having everything too convenient. You'll go mad with the monotony.

Sure, a house has to be efficient and easy to run.

But efficiency always reminds me of the story of the expert called in to streamline the activities of an office.

He discovered how much time was wasted in walking to the tea urn to get cups of tea. Then he worked out the time lost by people getting themselves drinks of water. This was obviated by a boy regularly calling round with tea, water jug, and glasses.

After a week, five people jumped out the window, crazy with the monotony.

In other words, when you're planning your dream home, remember the human element.

While all my other opinions about houses are only half-serious, I really mean this one. It involves the incalculable sentimentality, stubbornness, and perverse muddle-headedness that exists is everyone.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

"Oh, a two-bedroom house will be plenty big enough. We have only one child, you know."

DISC DIGEST

DESPITE the fact that it's one of the best pop discs in ages, I just couldn't take it at first hearing. I refer to "Highlights From the Glenn Miller Story." It's fraught with so much nostalgia of the war years that I got a lump in the throat. That super vocal group The Modernaires, originally featured in so many Miller hits, sing on one disc (DO70080) these wonderful numbers: "Gal In Kalamazoo," "Moonlight Cocktail," "Elmer's Tune," "Moonlight Serenade," "Chattanooga," "String of Pearls," "Serenade in Blue," "At Last," and "Perfidia." They have the benefit of 1954 recording and a Miller-slanted ork directed by Frank Scott.

I'M handing gold-plated umbrellas to Les Brown's band for their smash playing of "Into Each Heart Some Rain Must Fall," on DO70051. They produce a sumptuous background for Teresa Brewer, that redhead whose Calliope voice is winning new fans every day. This kid is star quality. Her coupling is an up-tempo number called "Too Much Mustard," in which she pleads for cooler kisses against another hot Les Brown accompaniment.

HERE'S a dear old-timer, "Heart Of My Heart," on DO70079. It boasts three vocal stars, Don Cornell, Alan Dale, and Johnny Desmond, and they do it in such a way that you can join in the choruses. I think you'll enjoy their vaudeville-style routine, which they also carry over on to the flipside, the droll "I Think I'll Fall in Love Today."

IF you're looking for a new "Musetta's Waltz Song" (La Boheme) to replace your played-to-death copy, hear Ljuba Welitsch on LO90. It's backed with another Puccini aria, "Love and Music," from "Tosca."

—BERNARD FLETCHER.

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Continuing . . . . A Witch in the Heather

low shot over there because of the winds off the Firth of Tay."

"I always hit a low shot when I don't need the loft," Andy said matter-of-factly.

"Another thing, son," said Bill. "I don't want you to be too disappointed if you lose. I know this is the opening tourney in your bid for the Grand Slam. But don't forget what Robbie Burns said—"

"Yeah. I know," said Andy. "'The best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley.' But that mouse forgot to keep his head down."

"Well, just remember there are more important things in life than winning a golf championship."

"Name one, Bill," the boy answered.

"Self-respect, for one thing. And sportsmanship. It's how you play the game that counts."

"I can't buy that, Bill," Andy said. "Winning should come first. The other things are secondary."

Bill sighed. "Some day you're going to discover how wrong you are, son. I hope you learn before you get hurt. I won't argue with you now because it probably won't do any good. But remember this: If you can make yourself a friend over there for every match you play, you're shooting par for life's course."

"I'm after birdies, Bill, not pars."

"Well, then, score a birdie for international relations. But, win or lose—when you come back you'd better start thinking about going to work here. I'll hold to my agreement and give you time off to play in the other tournaments. But I'm going to have an opening soon for a copy boy."

"Copy boy!" Andy stormed. "Holy smoke! I want to be a sports writer."

"Nobody starts as a sports writer on my papers," Bill said. "You have to learn to be a newspaperman first."

The argument ended inconclusively. But Andy left, determined to clear his first Grand Slam hurdle so he could continue his golf without interference.

During the voyage Andy spent most of his waking hours swinging a club on the sun deck, or down in the gym pulling the weights and working out on the rowing machine.

After landing at Southampton most of the team went to London for some sightseeing before getting down to work, but Andy headed straight for the course at Sandwich to practise.

It paid off with Andy winning his matches, both in twosome and foursome play, as the U.S. again won the cup, eight to four. Then, with most of the Americans entered in the British Amateur, the troupe took the train for St. Andrews.

When hired limousines from Edinburgh deposited the team at the St. Andrews hotel, two persons were waiting to meet Andy. The first was an old Scotsman with a weather-lined face and twinkling eyes. His gnarled hands spoke a lifetime of hard work, but his back was straight, and there was the spring of a young man in his step.

"Lad," he said, "I would be your caddy. But it'll cost ye a quid a round. What do you say, lad?"

"I say what's the normal rate?" Andy answered.

"Fifteen bob," the old man said, "but I charge extra for my sound advice on matters of golf."

"Okay, you robber," Andy laughed. "But I don't know if I can afford such advice. What's your name?"

"Ye can call me Mac."

"Okay, Mac, pick up my clubs from the limousine and meet me down on the tee in fifteen minutes."

"But, lad! It's nine o'clock of the evening."

"Sure. They tell me under Double British Summer Time it stays light until almost eleven this time of year. That gives me almost two hours to practise."

Mac walked away scratching his head and muttering about the crazy Americans.

Andy's other greeter-without-portfolio was a wee Scottish lass who had been standing in the lobby watching him shyly, trying to summon the courage to ask for his autograph. As Mac left, she steeled herself to intercept Andy.

"Mr. MacDuff," she said, "I've been assigned by the tournament committee as scorer for your match. I'm Ella McVey."

Andy's chin dropped two inches when he turned to greet her. She was lovely, with a fresh beauty forged in the winds that swept off St. Andrews Bay.

Andy stood speechless for a good minute, during which he took the girl's hand as if to shake it, but succeeded only in holding it tenderly in his big paw. He leaned forward to kiss her, but an uncharacteristic better judgment restrained him.

Finally he managed, "Ella, how am I going to keep my eye on the ball when you're standing around?"

She laughed enchantingly. "Thank you, sir," she said. "Now may I have your autograph?"

Andy signed the blue linen paper: "To Ella, who taught me what Robbie Burns meant when he said, 'Know prudent, cautious self-control is Wisdom's root.' Andy MacDuff."

"Thank you," she said. "I'll put this on my bedroom wall just below Jock Hay's signature."

"Who is Jock Hay?" Andy asked, smiling amusedly.

"Why, he's the best golfer in St. Andrews!" she answered, in a tone that accused Andy of being vastly ill-informed.

"Why put my signature below his?" Andy asked. "Why not above his?"

"Oh, that's a place you've got to earn," she said.

"And what did Jock Hay write? Nothing so poetic, I'll bet."

"Oh, but more so," she said. "He quoted Robbie Burns, too:

"'My love she's but a lassie yet,
My love she's but a lassie yet;
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be hauf sae saucy yet.'"

"Ah, but I don't insult you by thinking you're so immature," Andy said. "I can see that you're a grown woman."

"Aye, it's true," Ella responded flirtatiously. "But Jock wrote it, you see, three years ago."

"And you mean he hasn't done anything about it? What a retarded fellow!"

"Perhaps" she said, "I'm the one who's causing me to stand a year more."

Suddenly Andy snapped his mind back to business and away from the pleasures of young romance.

"Now," he said, "I must practise. If you'd care to join me on the tee, I'll show you how Jock Hay could hit the ball if you hadn't bewitched him."

While Ella exclaimed Scottish equivalents of "oohs" and "ahs," Andy pounded a bagful

from page 3

of practice balls long off the tee towards Mac, who was stationed almost three hundred yards down the fairway, trying to field the shots in the fading daylight.

"If I hit them any harder," Andy said, "I'll be hacking Old Mac into that creek out there."

"Not a creek," Ella corrected. "Here they're called 'burns,' and they're well placed throughout the golf course in positions that will likely plague you. But Jock Hay knows well the placement of each one."

"Oh, Jock Hay again? Is he playing in the tournament?"

"Of course," Ella said. "Don't you know he's your first opponent? That's why I applied for the score-keeping duties."

Andy grinned at her. "What would Jock say if I quit practising and took you for a walk down by the sea, behind that old railroad station over there?"

"Old railroad station! Why Mr. MacDuff, that's the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, the cradle of this fine game."

"I apologise. But you're avoiding the question."

"Sir," she said, "it's not a question of what Jock would say. Its a question of what I say."

"And what do you say?"

"Why, I say aye."

ANDY took Ella's hand and they strolled down to the shore of the turbulent North Sea, where it washes up on Scotland's east coast and pounds the rocky shore line with an ancient rough caress. They saw the water run in among the smooth rocks that jutted up out of the bay for many yards off the shore.

When Andy put his arm around Ella's shoulders, she slipped like quicksand from his grasp and ran down to the rocks, leaping from one to another until her sure-footed strides had taken her far out in the inlet. Andy followed more hesitantly, but at last he was by her side, sitting near her slim figure on a flat, smooth rock.

When he tried to kiss her, Ella slapped him.

"Mr. MacDuff," she said, "do all Americans go after everything so furiously as you go after golf and love?"

He tried to explain, half facetiously, half seriously: "It's a matter of time, Ella, my dear. There are only so many minutes in a day. Soon I'll have to get to bed, and you'll be gone. Then I can't kiss you. And tomorrow I'll be busy on the golf course, getting in two practice rounds."

"And tonight you wished to get in a practice round of romance against the moment the final match arrives, is that it?"

He sighed resignedly: "'The best-laid schemes . . .'" he quoted.

"Oh, don't mope so," she said, laughing. "You take defeat too hard! Come, and I'll introduce you to our Scottish heather and gorse. No doubt you'll see enough of it when you shoot into the rough this week, so you may as well become accustomed to it."

She took his hand and led him back over the rocks, then along the sea skirting the course. The landscape was wild and unappealing to Andy, yet he sensed that this raw terrain which nature had hewn somehow accounted for the unnamed longing racing in his blood.

He looked again at Ella and saw a strength of character, a fundamental soundness that seemed to be one with the rugged land. He drew her down beside him.

"Ella," he said, "please kiss me."

She smiled at him kindly. "No, Mr. MacDuff," she said. "You have some growing-up to do. I believe I'll let you stand a year or twa, and you'll not be half so saucy yet."

She stood up, and they strolled back to the hotel.

"Will I see you on the course tomorrow?" he asked.

"Aye," she said pertly, "and each day until you're eliminated, which may be at once."

He grinned. "Don't bet your father's kilt and bagpipes on it."

The next morning Andy felt shaky and tired. He had lain awake half the night thinking of Ella, her tantalising smile, her fresh beauty, and the inner loveliness that shone in her eyes. His joints felt stiff from leaping the rocks in the chill wind.

His highly prized concentration stuttered continually away from golf, evoking instead the image of the face that teasingly denied him the kisses he talways had taken so easily from other girls.

Mac, a stern look clouding his face, waited on the tee. "Lad," he said, "now ye've gone and done it. The whole town's buzzing like a beehive that ye had the audacity to call the old Royal and Ancient Golf Club a railroad station. Now, whatever caused ye to make such a mistake, laddie?"

Andy looked at the huge austere grey clubhouse, with its austere, conservative facade, its frowning surveillance of the first fairway, as if it were protecting the traditions of the game it had nurtured. It reminded him of nothing so much as a city railway terminal.

"I can't imagine," he told Mac dryly.

"Well, lad, ye should find an opportune time to apologise, or ye'll have the galleries against ye all the way."

"All the way, huh?" Andy asked. "Do you think I'll go all the way, Mac?"

"I don't know, lad. Your first opponent is a tough one. It's our local champion, Jock Hay."

"Jock Hay!" For the first time the name rang a bell in Andy's head. He had been too distracted with Ella last night to think clearly. It was the name his father had mentioned. "Say, I've got a cousin over here named Jock Hay. Do you suppose he's the one, or is every other guy named Jock Hay?"

"He's the one, lad," Mac said.

A hard, determined look flicked on in Andy's eyes. "So that's why my father read me the lecture on playing the game. He figured I might bump up against my dear cousin!"

"He's a nice boy, lad, and a good golfer," Mac said. "Don't dislike him because the luck of the draw has matched you against each other."

"I don't dislike him," Andy said. "I only want to beat him tomorrow, that's all. For more reasons than one."

"Oh, it's Ella, is it, lad?"

"Say, does everybody here know everybody's business?"

"It's a small town, lad, and there's not so much going on that we don't all know about it."

Peevishly, Andy teed off for a practice round and pushed his first drive deep into the gorse, near the spot where he and Ella had walked in the late Scottish twilight. He played out well, but on reaching the tricky green he three-putted.

It was the same way on the next hole, and the next, with Andy unable to rivet his mind to the game; incapable of

To page 49

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PATHS AND APPROACHES

The approach to your home can make or mar it. Indeed, it is so important that to be sure everything is right you should start right out in the street.

BEAUTIFUL APPROACH to the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Hutchinson, of Killara, N.S.W., is the envy of the district and a tourist attraction during spring flowering.

WHILE it gives you extra work to tend your footpath as well as your garden, it is well worth it, for it gives your property a welcoming air. Many streets look very attractive these days with grass plots mown and each allotment planted according to plan. Once established, trees selected for hardness as well as beauty need little attention.

Canberra's streets are an inspiration in this way. In spring many of them present a magnificent display of flowering trees growing out of well-cut grass. Surely there is no better welcome to any home than such a sight.

Now let us pass into the garden.

In Australia it is usual to have a gate, and as it is pushed open the approach to the house should lure you on.

The "open-gate picture" depends to a large extent on the degree of skill used in selecting an attractive path. Designs and materials vary enormously, so it's worth spending some time and thought in making up your mind exactly what you want. Take a look around and study, besides material, the width shape, and approach to the house.

First of all, a path must be dry and clean, for its primary purpose is to provide a smooth and easy walk to the house. Next, it must be attractive and must harmonise with the architecture of the dwelling.

The commonest materials for path-making are gravel, flagstones, bricks, and cement. Of these, stepping-stones are the cheapest and bricks the most expensive.

A warm-colored gravel, well rolled, makes a good path and gives a pleasant color contrast to lawns. It does, however, need special under-drainage, such as a base of crushed stone or cinders, to keep it firm in wet weather, and as gravel scatters so readily a brick border is really necessary. This should be laid before the crushed stone base.

A gravel path also requires raking and weeding, and the gravel needs periodic replenishing.

Cement is practical, but is seldom attractive. It gives a stiff, conventional look to any garden and where possible should be avoided.

A far more appealing path is made of brick or flagstones. Bricks should be rough surfaced, for smooth bricks are slippery and dangerous. They

GARDENING

should be laid in a 2in. thick bed of sand which has been firmly rolled until it is even. There should be a slight slope from one end of the path to the other to assist drainage.

An effective finish is obtained by laying the bricks in a simple pattern, as, for instance, in pairs, ends to sides. Joins can be cemented or filled with sand.

Crazy paving with flat pieces of stone makes a delightful path, especially when the stones are irregular and of different sizes. They should be set in a sand bed in the same way as bricks.

When the path is used a good deal, the joins are best cemented, but a far more fascinating effect is obtained if spaces are planted with low plants like English daisies, violas, thyme, and lobelia.

Last, but far from least, are stepping-stones. Maybe they aren't so practical as more substantial paths, but there is nothing more appealing than stones in grass. Stones should be about 2in. thick and of fairly uniform proportions.

Before laying the stones, walk in natural paces along the line where they are to be laid and place one at each step. Remove turf to fit the stones, firm the foundation, and on it put a layer of sand in which the stones can be firmly set so that they will never wobble. Lay the stones flush with the surface.

Sandstone and hard slate are both suitable for this purpose. The only snag with stepping-stones is that the grass edges have to be trimmed periodically.

The plan of the path varies with the material, length, style of house, and garden.

In big gardens, a wide path following the contours is delightful. Stepping-stones generally look nicer if they curve informally.

A short path often looks better straight, and formal straight-line architecture seems to call for straight paths in simple designs.

The width of the path is governed somewhat by the size of the house, but be sure to make it practical. Three feet is the minimum for two people walking abreast and an extra foot won't go amiss.

It is very important that paths always lead to something. If they are not required for utility purposes, place a table and chair, a sun-dial, a birds' bath, or a piece of statuary at the end. A purposeless path is stupid.

With the path laid, the only other consideration is planting.

Some people prefer grass right up to the path edges, others like a flower border. The disadvantage of the latter is that soil is inclined to wash or fall over the path. This can be prevented by establishing a good ground-cover with creeping plants or building in a retaining coping of cement or brick.

Low, creeping perennials like cat-mint, thyme, snow-in-summer, or many others can be encouraged to grow over the coping to give an informal look.

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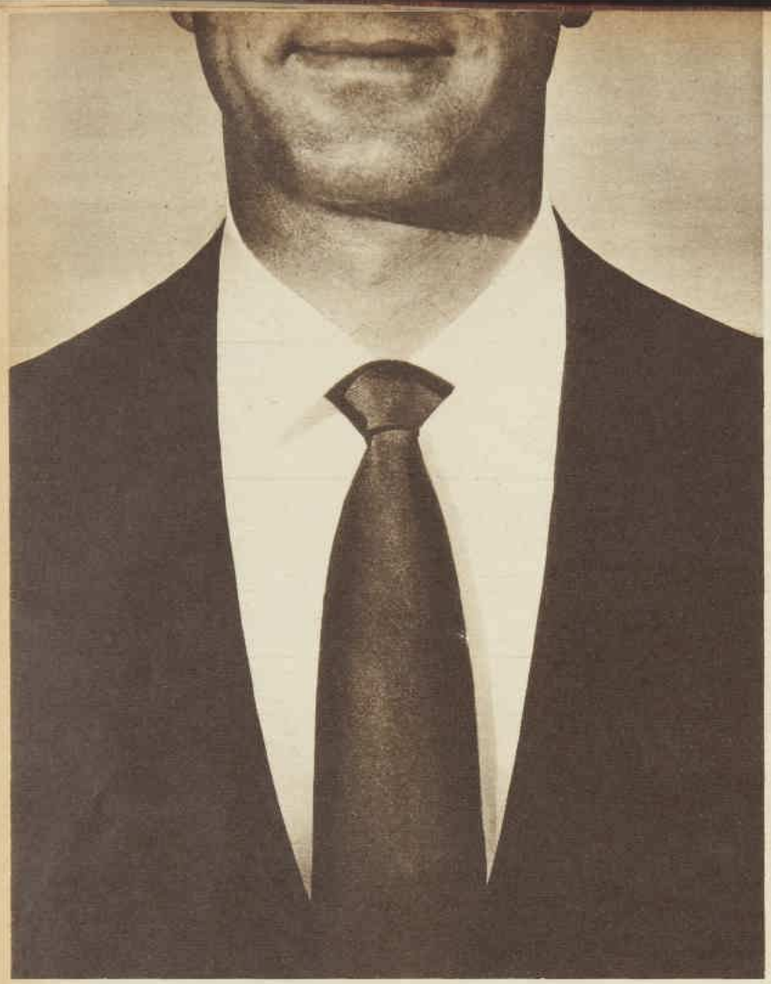

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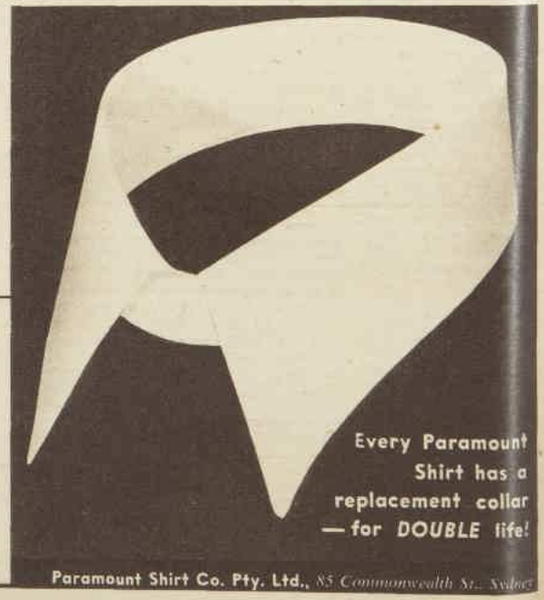

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Continuing . . . . A Witch in the Heather

deciphering the rolling greens that seemed to be uphill when they were downhill; that appeared to break left when actually they sloped right.

Mac tried to advise him, to educate him in the treachery of the terrain. But it was hard to believe some of Mac's astute tips. By the time they had reached the fifth hole, a sizeable gallery of local Scots had gathered to see the American play.

On the green Mac warned that the putt was steep uphill, but Andy decided to second-guess and play it for a level putt. He stopped three feet short of the cup and then missed again.

Angrily, he took his shiny putter and slammed it across his knee, bending the shaft, then tossed the oversized boomerang into the heather and stalked towards the hotel.

Following along behind like the spirit of propriety, Mac failed to disguise the disappointment in his voice when he cautioned, "Lad, that's your second mistake. Our golfers would give a lot for such a fine putter as yours."

Back in his room, remorse washed over Andy. A perfectionist at golf, he was intolerant of weakness in others, and so succumb to such a display of temper himself was virtually unthinkable. He decided to have it out with himself, and with Ella. He got her on the phone.

"Listen," said Andy; "why did you have to blab all over town about my railroad station crack?"

"I didn't," she said. "I told only the village publican when I saw him sweeping his walk this morning."

"Well, why weren't you out to see my play this morning?"

"Because I wanted you to miss me a little."

"Well, then, why don't you come over right now and walk with me while I try your blessed course again?"

"Because I'm straightening your bent putter for Jock Hay to use. His old wooden shaft is heavily taped and quite useless."

"He's going to use my putter!"

"Aye. The people in your gallery brought it to him—just for luck."

"Why didn't you tell me he was my cousin?"

"You didn't ask. Nor make an attempt to find him."

"Well, why didn't you kiss me last night?"

"Because," she answered promptly, "I wanted to wait until later in the week, when the moon comes up."

Andy gulped. "Ella!" he said. "Do you mean it?"

"Of course, I mean it. It's not fair for me to upset you like this, so you can't play golf. So I'll promise to kiss you, just to put your mind at ease."

"What do you mean—'so I can't play golf'? You don't bother my golf. Nothing can bother my golf."

"Aye, it's true. I've heard from Mac that you are sorely disturbed."

"Ella," Andy said, "I've been thinking of what you said last night. That I've got some growing-up to do. Maybe you're right."

"Aye," she said gently. "But not so right as I was last night. You've grown up a little since then."

Andy hung up in a trance . . .

The following morning, on the first tee, Mac introduced Andy to his opponent, Jock Hay.

"It's my great pleasure in meeting you, cousin," Jock said sincerely, a broad grin on his leathery face. He was about Andy's age, a hard-muscled young man whose bulging biceps came from working in the fields rather than from squeezing sponge-rubber balls.

"Glad to meet you," Andy said, thinking, "I've got to beat this guy. Even Ella, like all women, likes a winner." He saw her standing nearby, ready to follow him every step of the way.

During the early holes, Andy felt himself fighting a bad case of nerves. Machine that he was, he had been pointing too long for the British Amateur, dreaming too long of the Grand Slam, to take this first test calmly.

He knew he had to get a better grip of himself. Jock Hay was quiet, consistent, imperturbable, a hard type to lick. But Andy held even, halving the first four holes with pars.

Then came the fifth, and Andy made a mental note to remember the putting lesson so painfully won the previous morning. But while addressing his iron shot the pressure began to wear, as he sensed rather than saw Ella watching him intently.

His ball flew upward without authority and fell into the yawning trap guarding the green. While sizing up his lie, Andy could see hundreds of eyes watching him from the gallery, which had been herded into a semicircle around the opposite side of the green.

from page 45

The eyes appeared too blank to be human, like the eyes of an all-seeing judge, deciding his fate. It was uncomfortable. When Mac handed him a sand wedge, Andy stepped into the trap and took his stance, digging his feet in deeply.

Then, accidentally, he grounded his club. It was a muscular error, a nervous reaction, causing the club to touch the sand slightly, just behind the ball. It was a clear violation of the rules, calling for a penalty.

Yet, he rationalised, it was so slight. Just the barest flick of the club against the sand, perhaps disturbing only a few grains behind the partially embedded ball. And only Mac had seen it. Only Mac, his caddy, whom he was paying fat fees. He glanced up at the gnarled Scotsman, but Mac's face was immutable. It didn't tell him a thing.

Andy swung the club with force. An explosion of soft sand sprayed upward in a fan shape, falling like a parasol over the green.

And out of it flew the tiny white ball, arching true, landing short of the pin, then rolling to the right, away from the cup on the low side. The gallery applauded its approval.

Jock was on the green carpet, twenty feet back. Using the American's putter, its shaft now straight and true, he rammed the ball boldly towards the cavity. At the last second it curled away, lodging a few inches from the cup.

Andy conceded it for a par. Then he stepped to his own ball, which lay eight feet back, and remembering Mac's advice of the day before that the green was steep uphill, he stroked firmly and saw the ball dive into the hole like a field mouse scampering into the ground. He had his par, and the match remained even.

By the seventeenth the battle had become a war of nerves, with each player scoring par on each hole, each pulling remarkable shots out of the bag when he needed them, to prolong the tense tug-of-war. The gallery remained quiet as a congregation as the players walked to the eighteenth tee.

At the top of his backswing Andy felt his control waver. He pulled the shot badly into a smothered hook that angled towards the rough.

He saw the crowd fall away like shafts of wheat in the wind, then heard their breath catch in unison, and the babble of excitement that followed. It was a familiar mass reaction he recognised—that which came when a ball had hit a spectator.

An inner foreboding made Andy run to the spot in the heather where a circle of people had gathered. There, without surprise, he found the limp form of Ella unconscious on the ground. He picked her up in his arms and started for the Royal and Ancient clubhouse.

"I concede the match," he called to Jock Hay as he walked towards the grey building, towards help for Ella. And as he walked he prayed, "Please, please, let her be all right." . . .

Ella regained consciousness on a cot in the clubhouse. A doctor held an ice pack to the knot on her head while Andy sat holding her hand. She smiled into his eyes.

"I think there'll be a moon tonight," she said.

"Ella, darling!" Andy cried, weak with relief. "I love you."

Then the crowd was around them, the club stewards and officials of the tournament and townspeople from the gallery, all of them wishing her well, clucking like protective mother hens.

Jock Hay was there, too, saying, "It's a good thing it hit you on your head, lass, or Andy here would be payin' for an oak coffin instead of a wedding ring."

"Andy," Jock continued, "I'll not accept your conceding the match to me for the good purpose of rescuing a damsel in distress. We'll finish when Ella is well enough to see it."

The clamor from the crowd echoed Jock. "Aye, finish!" they shouted.

Andy surveyed their honest eyes, their smiling good humor. Their eyes told him one thing, clear and loud. "They do like me," Andy realised. "They honestly like me. I'm one of them."

"No!" Andy yelled. "Jock Hay has won the match. I disqualify myself for grounding my club on the fifth hole."

For a moment the silence of the moors fell upon the room. Andy saw Mac looking at him tenderly, a smile curling his mouth. "Tell them, Mac," he said.

"Ye've already told them, lad," Mac said. "And I'll be telling your father what a fine nephew I have in my next letter to America."

"Nephew!" Andy said, puzzled.

"Of course, lad. I'm your uncle—and Jock Hay's proud father. Old Bill asked me to keep an eye on you. But you no longer need it, I can see that."

"Well, I'll be—"

Ella rose shakily to her feet and kissed him, long and sweet, not minding the good-natured jeers from the crowd.

"Ella," Andy said enthusiastically, "we've got to send Bill a cable. I know what I'll say:

"HAVE SCORED ONLY GRAND SLAM I WANT. FLYING HOME WITH TROPHY — A WEE SCOTS LASSIE WITH A KNOT ON HER NOGGIN, WHO ADORES COPY BOYS. AS BOBBIE BURNS SAID, 'TO SEE HER IS TO LOVE HER, AND LOVE BUT HER FOREVER; FOR NATURE MADE HER WHAT SHE IS, AND NE'ER MADE SIC ANITHER!'"

"The castle of MacDuff I will surprise," Ella quoted.

"Robbie Burns?"

"No. Shakespeare, an Englishman," Ella replied contemptuously.

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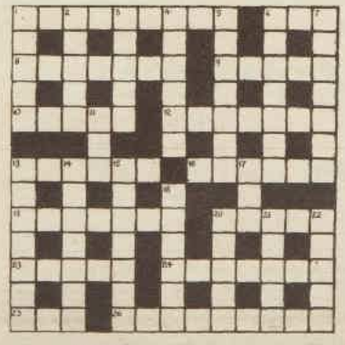
THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Will of troubled mates in a shelter (8).
6. I can make out of this lab the residence of the Pope (3).
8. Moisture on weapon is a colored arch (5).
9. A broken log inside this cold dwelling (5).
10. Composer of "The Dream of Gerontius" (5).
12. Such thing has a name but it is not real (7).
13. On the other side of a religious symbol (6).
16. It's not a pipe factory; wild roses are growing there (6).
19. A dairy product for the owner of the adjoining property (7).
20. Assign everything but no tea? (5).
23. Exemplary poem in the centre (5).
24. You twice perish in confusion when you plot secretly (7).
25. Not wet, or, if it is, it's not sweet (3).
26. Sancho Panza's duty was to look after this horse (8).

Solution will be published next week.

DOWN

1. Smooth and concise and mainly in old Gaelic (5).
2. Gain in oscillation (5).
3. Bream (Anagr. 5).
4. Meander itself round and gain in the finish (6).
5. Time-saver or just a clipper (7).
6. A short curtain (7).
7. Bus the inside of which may roll (7).
11. Past a dash (3).
13. Frightened though having wings for a start (7).
14. Bluntly or just in a circular way (7).
15. Early colonist but fifty less would make a good hunting dog (7).
17. Oh yet we trust that somehow good will be the final goal of . . . ("Tennyson, "In Memoriam") (3).
18. A couple of them would be worth ten shillings (6).
20. Foreign in a right to keep possession until debt is paid (5).
21. Fifty up in a flower (5).
22. The number of certain sightless rodents (5).

Solution to last week's crossword.

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Continuing . . . . The Bancrofts, by Half a Length

from page 5

waved at me. "Hello, there!" she called.

I turned to see if there was anyone behind me. "Me?" I asked. I jabbed my chest with my thumb.

She came down off the porch and approached the fence. "You're Mr. Bancroft, aren't you? We're your new neighbors. I'm Paula Jones, and skulking about somewhere are my husband and offspring. You haven't seen them, have you?" Her voice was like the centre of a chocolate cream.

"Not hide nor hair," I said pleasantly. "Say, you're certainly working the old place over."

"Mmmmm. I think it will be sweet. When we're tidied up I'd love to have you and Mrs. Bancroft help us warm it up."

"Very kind of you," I murmured. "We'll bring bread and salt."

"What a quaint idea," she said. "Is that local lore?"

"I read it somewhere," I explained sheepishly.

"You're New Yorkers, aren't you?"

Queasily, I realised that the children had been talking. "Yes," I said cautiously.

"I'm simply fascinated by your job," she said. "I suppose it's very top secret."

"No matter what my children tell you," I said, trying to be debonair about it. "I manufacture women's clothes."

"Oh, I see," she murmured with an amused smile.

"Just for the record," I asked her, "what line of work did they have me in?"

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation," she said.

"Narcotics Division?"

"They didn't say."

"Sometimes it's Narcotics, and sometimes it's plain old Secret Service."

I was about to tell her all about myself when her husband appeared. I haven't been to a movie since the Gold Diggers of 1935, but this man bore a striking resemblance to Ronald Colman, if I remember correctly.

All he needed was a patch over one eye and he could have posed for shirt ads. His opening gambit was, "Hello, neighbor, I'm Tim Jones," followed by a grip of steel.

Instantly, I realised that I should never have given up handball, but I managed not to wince. "Bancroft," I gasped. "Sy."

"Delighted. I wonder if I could ask you a great favor?"

"Sure," I said, trying to sound like old landed gentry, "name it."

"Well, we're on the torn-up side, and we haven't got our drinkables out. I wonder if I could borrow a Martini?"

Paula smiled ingratiatingly. "We're such creatures of habit," she said.

Hurriedly I ran over our liquor supply in my mind. Cherry cough medicine, cooking sherry that went down like sandpaper, vanilla, and maybe some gin. "I'll just whip up a batch," I said. "Say fifteen minutes?"

"You're a brick, old man."

Sullenly I watched his athletic figure retreating; then I dashed into the house. I found Ruthie in the kitchen making an apple pie. "How do you like the Jones'?" she asked.

"I see you've had the pleasure."

"Yes. I gave him a lift up from the village."

"Very toney-type people," I said.

"He's quite charming," she said absent-mindedly. "I haven't met her."

"You will. They're coming here for drinks."

"Sy, you didn't! We haven't got a drop of anything stronger than pasteurised milk."

"Yes, we have. I put something aside for snakebite." Frantically I rummaged in a dark corner. "Here we are."

"But I can't have a cocktail party now. My hair needs washing and the house is in a mess. The girls have been putting on a play in the living-room."

"Streetcar Named Desire?" I was mixing with wild abandon.

"Don't tease. Is Mrs. Jones awfully svelte?"

"Awfully."

"And look at me!" she wailed. "Hausfrau rampant."

"You look fine."

"You're only saying that."

I gave her a warm kiss. "You are practically perfect."

"What was she wearing?"

"Something sort of bullfightish."

"Chic! I knew it. And my good slacks are at the cleaners."

"Wear your bad ones."

She hurried past me to the icebox. "We were just going to have vegetable soup and egg sandwiches. Do you suppose they're nibblers?"

"What's the matter with a neighborly nibbler?"

"We're out of everything. We've just got olives and that smelly cheese. Well, it'll have to do. I'm going upstairs to take a shower, and you'd better change that T-shirt. It's got a hole right over your middle."

"Air conditioning," I told her, "and, besides, I'm a country mouse."

"Change!" she shouted over her shoulder, and she was gone.

I was sampling my brew when the girls showed up. "It smells medicine in here," said Patty. "Are you sick?"

"Not yet."

"Those are drinks, silly," said Ginny in a superior tone.

"I wouldn't drink it," Patty said.

"So young and so wise," I said, patting her. "Why don't you girls go wading?"

"We want to stay and watch you."

"You haven't got the price of admission," I said. "Run out and play, and if you see the Jones' coming let me know."

After a few minutes a shrill cry rang out. "They're coming, Daddy, they're coming!" They made it sound like a cavalry charge. Wiping my hands on my T-shirt, I went out to greet them. I should have stood in the kitchen. Tim had changed into a white jacket, and Mrs. Jones was wearing something yellow and blowy. I patted my hands nervously on my jeans and decided to give them the old Bancroft aplomb. "Didn't have a thing to wear," I said, guffawing heartily. "Have some fixewater?"

They were good-natured enough to accept a double dose. I motioned them into chairs, only then becoming aware of the fixed stares of my children. "Shoo," I hissed.

They sat in a tree close to the porch regarding us thoughtfully.

"Why don't you go 'be' somebody?" I suggested cheerfully. "How about Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe?" They didn't make a move. "Or Martin and Lewis?" There was no response. I turned to my guests. "Great little actresses," I said. "They eat up the theatre."

"Charming," murmured Paula. "Our little girl is so bookish. She reads French."

I thought of the thumbed comic books in the girls' room, and smiled weakly. "They come from a long line of extroverts," I said. "Very imaginative kids." I leaned over the balustrade. "Go imagine something, why don't you?"

"We're waiting for Mummy," said Patty. "We want to see what she's got on."

"Yes," said Ginny, "she was putting on her girdle."

"She has it on now, too," said Patty, pointing. Ruthie came out on the porch. I guess she looked nice, all right, except she was wearing something sort of dark and she had a look on her face which she only gets when she goes to the dentist. The girls took one disgruntled look and left.

"This is certainly a pleasure," Ruthie said, and groped around the table for a glass. Ruthie's not given to drink, but she tossed her Martini off like an old China hand. I figured it was Paula, in all that organdie. Ruthie gets intimidated around powerhouse women.

I began to wish we kept a vicious dog around the house; I was running low on insouciance myself. Ruthie's gaze started to stray around the porch. There was a lot of litter from the kids, only it seemed a little more colorful than usual.

They'd dragged out a bottle of cheeries, an old typewriter, some paper dolls and a copy of a lurid best-seller, handsomely illustrated.

"We're just camping," said Ruthie, groping for the book. She picked it up, blushing. "I don't know where they found this." Her remark dropped into a well. "How do you like living in the country?" she said—in Paula's direction.

"Which one?" Paula said sweetly.

I laughed weakly. Nobody joined me.

Tim's eyes narrowed unpleasantly at his wife. "Paula's here under protest," he said. "We were going to summer in the Bahamas, but I voted for the simple life."

Ruthie's gaze brightened. "So did I," she said enthusiastically.

"We were going to summer in Manhattan," I added sourly, "and I voted for Manhattan."

Ruthie joined forces with Tim by sitting next to him on the swing. The kids jump on it all the time so they sort of slid together in the middle. Ruthie loves an ally.

"Won't you have some cheese?" she asked warmly.

He smiled at her. "Thanks, it's awfully good." He munched happily.

"It's rat cheese," I said loudly. "I don't touch it myself."

Paula laughed. It was low down and effective. I walked over to her. "May I buoy up that olive?" I said, taking her glass from her.

"You're a dear," she said.

After I had joined her in several more drinks, we were in total agreement. I was a dear.

"Say," I said loudly, "why don't all four of us amble over to the club for dinner? All four of us could have a little drink, and then all four of us could have a little dance."

"I think," said Ruthie lightly, "that one of us has two sheets in the wind."

"Who?" I said looking around. "Where?"

Ruthie came over and put

To page 59

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P.102.WWHPs

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Film Fan-Fare

CONDUCTED BY M. J. McMAHON

Ann Miller

● The curious career of Ann Miller, the whirlwind tap-dancer from Texas, suggests that even a little extra in the way of talent and good looks does not automatically open doors to Hollywood stardom.

ANN failed to crash the movies at her first attempt, and it took a Broadway stage success to pave the way for the tall, lissom dance star to be rediscovered by Hollywood.

But even then her screen career unaccountably hung fire in a discouraging way through a score of mediocre musicals.

However, a few years ago a change came over the scene when Metro began to build up Ann's talent as a comedienne and put her into successively bigger roles in which she could act as well as dance.

"On the Town," Gene Kelly's excellent musical of 1949, "Lovely to Look At," which was a 1951 offering, and the more recent "Kiss Me, Kate" are among the better Miller movies.

Describing it as "a dream part," Ann herself thinks that Bianca in "Kiss Me, Kate" is the best of her 30-odd screen roles to date.

The Miller comedy technique is pert, and she has a vivacious personality that seems to go well with her swirling, fast-moving dance style.

"Athena" is the title of her latest picture, and in this she appears with Jane Powell, Debbie Reynolds, and crooner Vic Damone.

Looking backwards, moviegoers may be apt to feel that Ann Miller has been around Hollywood for a few years. And they're right.

Dark-haired, blue-eyed, 31-year-old Ann made her film debut when she was 14 (though she gave her age as 18) with a dance number in "New Faces of 1937."

With her mother she had come to Hollywood from Texas shortly after her 12th birthday to seek a career in movies.

The couple soon discovered that crashing studio gates is difficult for an unknown youngster, even one with a background of radio experience who could sing and create her own dance routines.

Two years passed before Ann got her first movie break in "New Faces." During this time she had kept the wolf from the door with theatrical engagements in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Better film parts followed with "The Life of the Party" and "Stage Door," which was made in 1937.

After "Radio City Revels" in 1938, Ann Miller looked to be well on her way to the top, but for some inexplicable reason her screen career came to a standstill.

Hollywood let her go, she turned to the stage to gain experience, made a personal hit in George White's "Scandals of 1940," and then returned to the West Coast with a movie contract in her pocket.

Now one of Hollywood's most popular bachelor girls, Ann Miller is a party girl who loves pretty clothes, perfume, furs.

She has an enviable string of escorts at her disposal and her name is constantly linked romantically with eligible men-about-Hollywood. So far she has shown no positive inclination to marry again.

Her first marriage to wealthy Reese Milner made the news as a fairy-tale romance in 1946.

However, this matrimonial venture was short-lived, for, after the premature birth of her baby daughter, Ann announced a separation and was divorced in 1947.

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Moira Shearer keen to play drama

LOVELY Moira Shearer has returned to films to prove to the world that she is not only a top ballerina but also a good dramatic actress.

She plays four roles—Daphne, Olga, Colette and Sylvia—in her latest picture, "The Man Who Loved Redheads." As Sylvia, Moira is the youngster with whom John Justin falls in love. Daphne is a straight dramatic role. Olga calls for Moira to display her dance talents. As Colette she displays grace and beauty as a fashion model with whom Justin—debonair man that he is—also falls in love.

* * *

ROBERT MORLEY is producing, directing, and acting in "The Ostrich Egg" in London's West End. The versatile Morley recently completed a feature role in Metro's "Beau Brummel," which was filmed in London with Stewart Granger starring.

* * *

WHEN Bing Crosby returns to Paris later in the year, he may find a surprise awaiting him. There's a little man on the Avenue Wagram who sells chestnuts. In front of his stand he proudly displays a picture of himself with Bing. Underneath the photograph the sign reads that Crosby really loves his chestnuts more than anything.

AFTER a two-year jaunt abroad, Alan Ladd has decided to make his future films in Hollywood. Favorably commenting on his experiences while filming in England, Canada, and on the Continent, Ladd says: "Everywhere we went my family and I were met with the greatest friendliness and cordiality. We found gracious people who had only the kindest things to say about Hollywood—our people and our pictures. Movie techniques are more leisurely abroad than they are at home."

* * *

WITH the return of Kirk Douglas from the Bahamas the other day, Hollywood began looking like a movie town—complete with stars—once again. Upon arrival Kirk found Gene Tierney, Victor Mature, Ann Sheridan, Lana Turner, Elizabeth Taylor, Michael Wilding, and other stars back at home after trips abroad. Douglas will be in Hollywood for a few months at least completing work in Walt Disney's "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," which took him from England to the Bahamas.

* * *

DOWN on the set of "The Belles of St. Trinians"—the film of the wicked schoolgirls created by famous cartoonist Ronald Searle—the actresses who are playing the schoolgirl monsters have issued their own college magazine. Its slogan is "The battle of the winter sales was won on the playing fields of St. Trinians."

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CAPITOL.—★ "Is Your Honeymoon Really Necessary?" comedy, starring David Tomlinson, Bonar Colleano Diana Dors. (See review this page.) Plus ★ "Escape Route," thriller, starring George Raft, Sally Gray.

CENTURY.—★★ "The Moon is Blue," comedy, starring David Niven, William Holden, Maggie McNamara.

EMBASSY.—★★ "The Captain's Paradise," comedy, starring Alec Guinness, Yvonne de Carlo, Celia Johnson. Plus featurettes.

ESQUIRE.—★ "The Highwayman," cinecolor period adventure, starring Philip Friend, Wanda Hendrix. Plus "Siren of Atlantis," adventure, starring Maria Montez, Jean-Pierre Aumont. (Re-release.)

LIBERTY.—★★ "All the Brothers Were Valiant," technicolor period adventure, starring Robert Taylor, Ann Blyth, Stewart Granger. Plus featurettes.

LYRIC.—★★ "Houdini," technicolor romantic drama, starring Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh. Plus ★ "Blaze of Noon," drama, starring Sonny Tufts, William Holden, Anne Baxter, Sterling Hayden. (Both re-releases.)

MAYFAIR.—★ "Second Chance," technicolor suspense drama, starring Robert Mitchum, Linda Darnell, Jack Palance. Plus ★ "Marry Me Again," comedy, starring Marie Wilson, Robert Cummings.

PLAZA.—★★ "How To Marry a Millionaire," technicolor CinemaScope comedy, starring Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, Lauren Bacall. Plus "Coronation Parade," technicolor CinemaScope feature.

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★ "Little Boy Lost," drama, starring Bing Crosby, Claude Dauphin. Plus featurettes.

SAVOY.—★★★ "One Summer of Happiness," Swedish-language drama, starring Ulla Jacobsson, Folke Sundquist. Plus ★★ "Ukrainian Concert Hall," color music feature.

STATE.—★★★ "Roman Holiday," romantic comedy, starring Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn. Plus featurettes.

ST. JAMES.—★★ "Executive Suite," drama, starring William Holden, Paul Douglas, June Allyson, and an all-star cast. Plus featurettes.

VARIETY.—★ "Vienna Waltzes," drama, starring Anton Walbrook, Marthe Harell. Plus ★★ "A Day in the Country," French-language featurette.

VICTORY.—★ "It Came From Outer Space," science fiction drama, starring Richard Carlson, Barbara Rush, Charles Drake. Plus ★ "Yankee Buccaneer," technicolor sea adventure, starring Jeff Chandler, Suzan Ball.

Films not yet reviewed

PALACE.—"Fort Vengeance," cinecolor outdoor drama, starring James Craig, Rita Moreno. Plus "Don't Trust Your Husband," comedy, starring Fred MacMurray, Madeleine Carroll. (Re-release.)

PARK.—"Flight Nurse," war drama, starring Forrest Tucker, Joan Leslie, Arthur Franz. Plus "Phantom Killer," murder mystery, starring Dick Purcell, Joan Woodbury. (Re-release.)

REGENT.—"King of the Khyber Rifles," technicolor CinemaScope period adventure, starring Tyrone Power, Terry Moore, Michael Rennie. Plus featurettes.

Talking of FILMS

By M. J. McMAHON

★ *Is Your Honeymoon Really Necessary?*

IN spite of the efforts of the hard-working cast, there are long, dull patches throughout this British comedy.

A conventional bedroom farce, it's about an American air ace (Bonar Colleano) who flies back to London with a second bride (Diana Deckers), only to discover on his wedding night that, according to his English ex-wife (Diana Dors), his U.S. divorce is not legal in Britain.

Unless he kicks through with the divorce settlement she never had, says No. 1 wife, she will spill the beans to the bride.

You can probably guess at the entanglements that ensue.

A woman-shy English lawyer (David Tomlinson) is unwillingly recruited to straighten out the mix-up. Naturally, he never looks like succeeding.

But the bits of comedy instigated by Tomlinson while attempting to arrange a compromise between the parties are the source of all the film's humor.

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XE2

1. SACKED from his job as a chorus boy in "Here Come the Girls" by Fraser (Fred Clark), the producer, Stanley Snodgrass (Bob Hope) is tossed out into the snow after he has completely ruined a rehearsal.

2. CONSOLED by talented showgirl Daisy (Rosemary Clooney), Stanley is determined not to be discouraged by this. She convinces him he will be a star.

3. ATTEMPTED murder of the star of the show, Allen Trent (Tony Martin), is blamed on a jealous former suitor of Irene (Arlene Dahl), centre, Trent's fiancee. Police claim the thug is a vicious killer.

4. REHIRED to take the lead in the show at Irene's suggestion, Stanley unwittingly becomes bait for a trap to snare the killer when he strikes again.

NEW HOPE COMEDY

★ Comedian Bob Hope is in top form in Paramount's 1900 vintage technicolor musical "Here Come the Girls," in which he co-stars with singers Rosemary Clooney, Tony Martin, and Arlene Dahl.

Hope plays Stanley Snodgrass, known as "the oldest chorus boy in the world." Stanley's ambition is to be a star.

When he is made a star for the sake of expediency, Stanley unknowingly becomes the target for attacks by a jealous maniac.

5. ESCORTING Irene to a nightclub after the show, smug Stanley exposes himself to grave danger. Then the killer is caught, and Stanley is fired.

6. WORKING on his step father's coal cart, Stanley is rehired by Fraser after the killer makes jail break.

7. KILLER, disguised as a clown, attacks Stanley with a knife. Stanley misses death by inches during long chase and the killer falls to his death.

8. MISTAKENLY believing himself mortally wounded, Stanley eventually recovers, marries Daisy, and wins a feature spot in the show.

SHE'S HOT ON ICE

Britta Rahlen, star of the "Ice Parade", has thrills aplenty — but how about chills?

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Ava swots Spanish in Italy

From BILL STRUTTON, of our London office

Ava Gardner is studying to be a gipsy. You wouldn't think there'd be any exams to pass for this, but the dark Ava is cramming up on her folklore and on flamenco dancing with deep earnestness.

SHE is doing this in Rome, where half Hollywood has converged to make one picture or another with a European location and on a European budget. For it costs only half as much to make a picture here as it does back home.

Every day you can walk past Ava's portable dressing-room on the set of "The Barefoot Contessa," out on the sprawling lot of Cinecitta studios beyond Rome, and hear the strains of Spanish guitar music issuing from behind her star-marked door. And if you listen more closely you can hear Ava mumbling out loud over her Spanish verbs.

Even when she comes on to the set, Ava Gardner brings a portable radio with her. She must have music wherever she goes. You are obliged to talk to her through it.

The only time she observes radio silence is during that odd religious hush which happens once or twice a day; it denotes that after all the preparation, hammering, scene shifting, rehearsing, everybody is actually ready to shoot a minute or so of screen time.

Then she unfolds herself from her studio chair, strolls nonchalantly before the camera, into the glare of the arc lights. With this, her whole personality lights up. She is sparkling, vital.

Facing an urbane, mildly grinning Humphrey Bogart, she throws her head up arrogantly and delivers her lines impeccably. You wouldn't think Ava had been swotting Spanish verbs all morning.

"Cut!" says Joseph Mankiewicz, the director, a well-fed but handsome fellow. "Swell, honey. We'll print that."

Ava drifts back to her music. But beneath this casualness there is considerable excitement. The fact is that she is engaged in making what may be one of the biggest pictures in her career. "The Barefoot Contessa" stars her as a dancer discovered by a fading Hollywood director. He makes her into a great star. It's frankly a fairy-tale, in which the barefoot dancer finally marries an aristocrat.

But what lends "The Barefoot Contessa" its great importance is that the great Mankiewicz is directing it. He ranks with John Huston among the brilliant few in the world whose touch can turn an ordinary screen-play into something memorable.

AVA GARDNER, carrying orchids from an admirer and wearing "fly-away" bows in her hat, arrives in Rome for what may be her biggest role to date—the title role in "The Barefoot Contessa." Ava spends a large part of the picture walking in her bare feet and studying Spanish to give herself the correct accent of a Spanish gipsy.

Glamor cast

MANKIEWICZ has collected his cast for "The Barefoot Contessa" from all over the world and with little apparent method. Italy's Gina Lollobrigida is also in the star billing. So is Humphrey Bogart. Britain's Elizabeth Sellars has just flown to Rome to join the unit.

The director has given American Ava Gardner a lisping Spanish accent; English Elizabeth Sellars has a twangy American accent as Bogart's wife; Marius Goring, as British as roast beef, has to wear a black wig and talk broken English as a South American millionaire.

Edmund O'Brien was ordered, not to reduce his waistline, but to expand it by several inches in order to fit his role as a puffy publicity man. He had to put on two stone in a hurry.

When the lovely Gina Lollobrigida first met Hollywood's Ava Gardner on the set, the event was somewhat spoiled because Ava had her feet in a bucket. Since she plays most of her role in bare feet, she finds it hard going, and takes time off to soften the calluses in a footbath.

Complained Ava, through a twanging of guitars: "I don't think Gina liked me. She left without saying goodbye. Don't know why. I've never done anything to her."

The most down-to-earth character in the dazzling cast is, of course, Humphrey Bogart. He wears an English tweed cap, a loud American shirt, a rumpled old raincoat, and an air of boredom.

The only thing that riles him is when he is described by American columnists as "ageing and balding." He and his wife, Lauren Bacall, who has flown in to join him, long to play together in a film. Says Humphrey: "Maybe they could find me a spot in it as my wife's father."

Bogart, now a millionaire, has worked out a policy to keep his big-star salary rolling in. "A man's got to think of the future. Maybe folks won't want this old face around for ever. But I'm trying to keep it alive.

"I'm a freelance and I'm picking only the best directors, like John Huston, William Wyler, George Stevens, and Joe Mankiewicz here. That's the nearest thing you can get to a cert. in this business. At least I won't get killed by bad pictures."

He remains a great tease. Passing Ava Gardner's dressing-room, hearing the Spanish music, he poked his head inside the door. "How's the senora?" he inquired. "Still learning to be a gipsy?" There came a screech of pretended feminine rage from within, and a missile thudded against the door.

Bogart withdrew his head hastily, grinning. "That's what I like about Ava. A girl with spirit. A gipsy. She's perfectly cast, boy, perfectly cast."

HOLLYWOOD'S Humphrey Bogart and Ava Gardner are shown here with English actress Elizabeth Sellars (left) as they leave a cinema after a film premiere in a scene from the film "The Barefoot Contessa," in which they are all playing.

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Continuing . . . . The Bancrofts, by Half a Length

from page 51

her hand on my arm. "You didn't have much lunch, dear."

"Olives are very nourishing," I said huffily. "Now what about my plan?"

"Wonderful," said Tim. "You two come as our guests."

"That's awfully nice of you," said Ruthie, "but it's too late to get a baby sitter. Another time."

Tim took her hand. "Is that a promise?" Ruthie nodded.

Paula rose languidly. "It's been fun," she said, and trailed down the steps. Tim crushed my hand and followed her. Their voices floated back at us through the gathering dusk. Then they were gone. I circled for a landing in the porch swing. Ruthie began to brush up the crumbs.

"Better leave something for the birds," I said.

"This whole episode was for the birds," said Ruthie. "Coming over here in that yellow organdie job."

"How about him? He looked like a Good Humor man."

"She probably made him wear it."

"Listen," I said in a knowing tone. "I've seen guys like him before. They do exercises all the time and have their pyjamas tailor-made."

"What's the matter with exercise?" Ruthie demanded. "It's better than going around holding your breath all the time, like you do."

"When do I hold my breath?" I said hotly.

"I've seen you. In the morning when you look at yourself sideways in the mirror. You're only deluding yourself."

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do," I said cuttingly. "From now on I'm going to emulate your friend Mr. Jones. I'll get my tailor to knock out a white jacket, and I'll sashay around the neighborhood borrowing Martinis."

"Just because a man tries to live graciously," Ruthie said coldly.

"First we've got to live in the country," I said warmly, "and then we've got to live graciously in the country. Swell."

Ruthie began breathing hard and I could see things shaping up for a spat. I rose with what I considered great dignity.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To dress for dinner."

"Sy Bancroft," she said angrily, "don't you dare!"

"To dress for dinner," I persisted, "including a maroon cummerbund."

I should never have started it. That night, when I came down after my shower, some changes had been made. There was a table set out on the front porch, and there were candles on it.

After a moment the distaff side appeared en masse in the doorway, all dressed in their Sunday-school clothes. The girls seemed a little bewildered, but they'll always go along with a gag. "Good evening, Father," they said together, demurely. My children had never greeted me with gentility in all their lives.

"It's me," I said. "Daddy."

"We know, Father."

"Father." I said it aloud. It was sort of Clarence Day. I like it. I pulled out Ruthie's chair and then took my own. "Say," I said, "maybe there's something to this."

Ruthie smiled. "I got the baby-sitter in to serve dinner," she said, "and I told her I'd ring for what we want, so don't holler."

Our baby-sitter is a large, open-faced girl of sixteen. She came in and thrust the platter of chops under my nose. "Here," she said, "dive in."

From across the way we heard the tinkle of glass and china. "Get a load of the Jones'," I said.

The household effects seemed to have got straightened out in jig time over there. Their terrace was alive with candlelight, and we saw a glass table set with silver and flowers. A butler was doing the honors, and after a moment Tim rose, glass in hand, and lifted it in our direction.

"Should I make a speech?" I asked Ruthie.

"Oh, sit down."

All through dinner, the kids kept swivelling in their chairs to take a gander at what was going on. Finally Patty couldn't stand it any more. "Look," she said, "what they're eating is on fire." There was a note of disappointment in her voice.

"Eat your nice tapioca," Ruthie said, "and never mind."

"But it's burning like anything," Ginny said.

"So did Rome," I commented. "Finish your dessert."

"I don't care for it, thank you."

They both pushed their plates away and sighed.

"Daddy," Patty said suddenly, "can we go to school in Switzerland?"

"What's the matter with the school here?" I asked politely.

"Melanie Jones is going to Switzerland," Patty said.

"Yes. She can order icecream in French. Any flavor," Ginny said.

"Accomplished child," I said coldly.

"Well, can we go to school in Switzerland?"

"You can clear the dishes," Ruthie said, "right now."

Unhappily they loaded up. "Melanie's butler does the butling over there," said Ginny. She made it sound like the promised land.

"This is 'over here,'" Ruthie said, "and I'm not going ot tell you twice." They went out, burdened.

"Alone at last," I said in a friendly voice. "That's a pretty dress."

Ruthie eyed it with dissatisfaction. "I need something pastel," she said dreamily, "something pastel and sort of blowy."

Out of the corner of my eye I could see Paula's draperies stirring in the breeze.

"I know I'm not the type," Ruthie said flatly. "I'm small and pudgy. It's just that all of a sudden I'm sick of being small and pudgy." She turned critical eyes on me. "Sy," she said, "why don't you grow a moustache?"

Tim Jones, I recalled, sported a small, dark moustache. Ruthie went on: "I think you'd look distinguished."

"Tired of plain, unadorned me?" I asked lightly.

There was the sound of voices being raised across the way. Then Tim came down the steps within hailing distance. "Hello, you two," he called, "come join us for coffee?"

"Let's," Ruthie said eagerly.

She took the lead. Paula's face brightened as we came up the steps. "Good," she said. "I'm glad you came over. Tim and I can only stand each other through he main course."

Ruthie looked at me and then at her shoe tops.

Tim smiled stiffly. "Company manners, darling," he said icily.

"Don't mind us," I muttered.

"Brandy?" He went over to the table and filled four snifters. "This is really old stuff," he said. "My father put it down."

Paula's laugh tinkled unpleasantly. "He certainly did. In fact, he died of it."

Tim's mouth got thin. "He died of heart failure."

"Very well, pet. Heart failure." She turned to Ruthie. "What do you do with yourself all day in this forsaken place? I know I'm just going to lose my mind."

"None of us will miss it," said Tim.

"Clever," Paula snapped.

"Say," I said weakly, "how about a rubber of bridge?"

"We don't play. Paula persists in trumping my ace."

I tried again. "What kind of television reception do you get?"

"Melanie's watching it now. She doesnt like to be disturbed."

As she spoke, a child appeared in the doorway. That is, I think it was a child. She looked more like a cut-down adult. "Mon pere," she said imperiously, "doucement, s'il vous plait. Je suis occupee."

"What's on her mind?" Tim demanded crossly. "And why can't that kid speak English?"

"Chacun a son gout, Papa," she said haughtily. "Les gens du monte parlent francais."

"Is she insulting me?" Tim said hotly.

Ruthie looked uncomfortable. "I studied Spanish in school," she said.

"I never went to school," said Paula languidly, as she turned to me. "So that leaves you."

"Pig Latin," I choked.

Tim stormed across the terrace. "What's going on—that's what I want to know." He turned on me with an almost helpless expression on his face. "My own kid could be rude to me, and I'd never know it."

"I was only asking you to be quiet because I'm busy," Melanie said in a strident voice. "I'm watching the Continental!" With that she turned and marched back into the house, slamming the door behind her.

Tim turned on Paula. "You had to send her to finishing school."

"She reads a menu beautifully," Paula said, and she yawned.

I shuffled my shoes and looked imploringly at Ruthie. She had a dazed look on her face.

"Well," I trumpeted loudly, "early to bed, early to rise."

"You're not going already?" Tim asked urgently.

"We have to say good-night to the girls," Ruthie said quickly. "It's been very nice. You come to us next time."

Tim looked at us despairingly. "We have a projection-room," he said hopefully. "We could show you a double feature. We have them flown in from New York."

"Just like the Roxy," said Paula. "Tim runs the popcorn concession."

I inched out of my chair. "We'll come again."

I grabbed Ruthie and hustled her towards the steps. They started in again as we reached the bottom. Tim's voice rose irritably. "It is not Rin Tin Tin. It's a musical!"

We bolted. A few minutes later we drew up, winded, on our own sagging front porch and collapsed on the top step. The window on the second story was raised, and Patty hung out of it. "Did they give you something fiery to eat?" she asked avidly.

"They gave us both barrels," I said, "and why aren't you in bed?"

"I've been playing Lost in the Desert, and I have to keep going to the bathroom for water."

"Well, tank up and turn out the light," I ordered.

"Come tuck us in."

Ruthie and I wnt up together. Ginny had a sun helmet on and a bottle tied on to her pyjamas. Patty had a carafe and two bottles of lemonade.

"We've joined the French Foreign Legion," they explained.

I gathered up all the liquid refreshment and herded them into bed.

"Daddy," said Patty, sleepily. "Do they speak French in the French Legion?"

"Cherchez la femme," I said, turning out the light. "And that's an order."

Ruthie kissed them and joined me in the hall. We went into our own room. Across the way the crystal chandeliers sparkled in the Jones manse.

Ruthie went to the mirror and looked at herself critically. "She's thinner than I am and more sophisticated, and he's in better shape than you are."

She came over and put her arms around me. "But they're too fancy," she said, "and they fight all the time, and they have an awful, bilingual child. It's the very thing we were running away from in the city."

We walked to the window and stood side by side, watching the glitter. I put my arm around Ruthie's shoulders. "Honey," I said, "plain or fancy, town or country—to thine own self be true."

"Yes," said Ruthie snuggling up. "Let's not try to keep up with the Jones'."

"Keep up with them?" I said loftily. "In the human race, it's the Bancrofts, by half a length."

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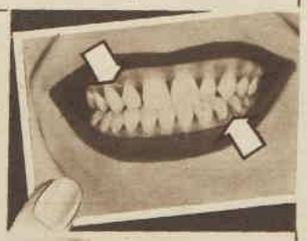

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Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

from page 7

"The Dark Wind" is a very good play, I'm sure."

"It's the best thing Jerome has ever done," he said. "The part of Paul——"

"Yes. You'll be wonderful as Paul. But the girl."

"It's the best part you've ever had. The most challenging."

"I know. But—I waited until tonight to tell you this. I don't want to do it."

He stared at her incredulously. "Do you realise half the actresses on Broadway would give their eyeteeth for that part?"

She smiled. "For any part opposite Humphrey Ward. Poor Rachel Sabinson said once that playing opposite you was the American actress' equivalent of hara-kiri, but how we fight for the privilege!"

Rachel. What made her think of Rachel, tonight of all nights? Why poor Rachel? . . . Because Rachel has been sick. Calm down. Don't panic. It's a coincidence. That's all. Coincidence. Brenna can't know anything. No one could.

"It's a good part, Humphrey, and it's a great honor to play opposite you. But we've been married five years now and——"

"Now, let's not start that again tonight!"

She said steadily, "I told you when I married you that I didn't have any great stage ambitions."

This was true. Brenna was utterly lacking in personal ambition. She took entirely for granted such matters as the inheritance of her theatrical blood, her position in the world of the theatre. It was perhaps natural that she should, for these things had come to her by birth, without the struggle, the failure, the agony of the repeated attempts that had brought Humphrey from his friendless boyhood in the streets of Brooklyn to the hard-won top of his profession.

Brenna said now, "You've always known that the most important thing in my life was to be our good marriage. I've tried to make it a good marriage."

She had tried. With her infinite patience with his son, Gabe, whom she had taken as an awkward, hostile eleven-year-old and transformed into her devoted slave. With her management of Humphrey's household so that each little detail should contribute, however unobtrusively, to his comfort. With their personal relationship. Brenna loved him, of course; rather, she adored him.

Doubtless her present concern stemmed from the state of her parents' marriage. Her father, Otis Laugharn, the famous Shakespearian actor, and her mother, Georgie Laugharn, star in musical comedies, had been amicably separated for years. As their only child, Brenna had been shunted from one to the other, from school to school and continent to continent.

"Ours is a good marriage," Humphrey said now. "You know that."

"Yes. All the love and tenderness that can exist between two people. But we haven't a family yet."

"There's plenty of time for that. After this play, perhaps."

"You said that last year. And the year before."

Brenna should have known better than to start this old argument again tonight of all nights, when Humphrey needed to keep his thoughts entirely on what was ahead for him. He remembered almost with a start that Brenna had absolutely no idea what was ahead for him.

Her eyes softened. "Darling, is it because Peg died having Gabe—is that why you're afraid for me?"

Actually, in spite of their having met in a New York producer's office, Peg had been a robust girl from an Iowa farm. She had had no trouble at all with childbirth. Brenna had simply assumed that she had, because Peg had died the year of Gabe's birth. But Humphrey muttered, "M'm'm," and lowered his head.

"I'm strong," said Brenna cheerfully. "There's no reason to be afraid for me. Having babies is quite simple nowadays, anyway."

HUMPHREY could not tell her that he was not in the least afraid for her. That what he was afraid for was the even and pleasant tenor of his life, suddenly disrupted with midnight howls and 2 a.m. feedings and colic, and wet diapers. Even for Humphrey's comfort, Brenna would never be one to hand over the care of her child to a nursemaid.

"Brenna," he said. "You must remember you are a Laugharn. The daughter of Otis Laugharn, the granddaughter of Ira Laugharn, the only remaining descendant of one of the proudest theatrical families in English tradition. You cannot simply refuse the best part that has ever been offered you!"

"Why not?" Brenna laughed. "Especially when I'm refusing it so that I won't be the only remaining Laugharn descendant? Won't we have wonderful children, Humphrey? I'm sorry I'm such a disappointment to you dramatically, but think of how well our children should be able to act. An even greater Humphrey Ward!"

It was true that the mixing of the robust talent of Humphrey Ward with the aristocratic tradition of the Laugharns was bound to produce dramatic history. But the thought of another Humphrey Ward, greater even than he himself, was a repulsive one. Humphrey had been through all this business of diapers and feedings years ago. He had a son.

While Gabe, at nearly 17, showed no sign at all of dramatic talent, there was always the hope that some day he would come to his senses, take his proper place in the world where he belonged, behind the footlights.

Humphrey stroked his fingers down the silkiness of Brenna's soft hair. He said quietly, "I do understand how you feel, Brenna."

Her aristocratic young profile turned; her lips touched his. "You are always so kind. So gentle."

Unwanted, thoughts of what lay ahead of him in the next few minutes occurred and recurred. You are always so kind. So gentle.

He noticed with irritation that he had actually stayed longer than the necessary ten minutes. He said abruptly, "We'll regard the matter as settled then. Rehearsals start September third. Try-out in Boston. Horrible place, Boston. But the best of a bad lot."

Brenna put her head up incredulously. "Humphrey!"

He said firmly, "This is very important to me, my dear. To our marriage. We'll regard the matter as settled."

Brenna was silent, her head turned. He kissed the soft whiteness at the back of her neck, hastily. Brenna, thank goodness, was not a woman who wept to get her way, as had many of the women Humphrey Ward had known.

His own dressing-room was next door. Its normally brown-and-white Spartan simplicity was also cluttered by telegrams and horrid with the bier-like scent of flowers. A tall, stooped boy, who seemed to be all hands and feet, was standing by the dressing-table.

No visitors, on strictest orders, were allowed in Humphrey's dressing-room. He could only surmise no permission had been asked.

He said coldly, "Gabe! I didn't expect you. Getting sentimental about your father's last performances?"

"No, sir," said Gabe very politely. "Brenna thought——"

Of course. Brenna thought Gabe should come, out of respect for his father. Nothing more than that. Humphrey felt the rising irritation that the sight of Gabe always seemed to stir in him these days. This was partly due to the size and age of him. With Gabe, it was absolutely impossible for Humphrey to take even one year from his actual age of thirty-seven.

Actors should never do anything so inadvisable as to marry in their teens and have a son when barely twenty. Without Gabe, Humphrey could easily have passed for thirty, perhaps even his late twenties. Humphrey's weight was exactly what it had been at eighteen; his hair as dark and nearly as thick.

He had had one bad scare, when his fingers had suddenly touched a bare spot in his

To page 62

"No sugar or cream, and don't forget to make carbon copies, darling."

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Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

from page 61

one of the major crises of his life. But he had immediately undertaken a series of expensive scalp treatments. He still religiously applied the scalp ointment every day, though the specialist had assured him there was no longer any necessity.

Thinking of it, he sat down and began to apply the ointment now, mostly from the desire to have something physical to do while he fought again the unreasoning resentment at Gabe, now standing behind him, towering over him.

"Sit down!" he snapped.

He saw Gabe's look of surprise. But the boy, respectful, as always—why shouldn't he be respectful, he had had the best training, in the best schools, all the advantages Humphrey himself had lacked—merely said, "Yes, sir," and sat down.

Humphrey cleared his throat. "Good day at school?"

"School's out, sir."

"Oh." Humphrey massaged his scalp with more vigor than necessary. "What did you do, then?"

"I just fooled around."

"You must have done something!"

"Well, I—went to the park. The trees are coming out full now, and some of the bushes and flowers."

Sometimes Humphrey thought that there burned behind Gabe's nearsighted brown eyes a light that approximated that behind his own black ones. For years Humphrey had pitted his determination and authority against Gabe's determination—forbidding camps, even visits to the country—without coming close to even touching it. Gabe loved the growing things that Humphrey abominated. The blood of his Iowa grandparents, doubtless. Humphrey shuddered at the thought.

But Gabe had the theatre in his bones, his background. It should be in his soul. Incredible that he should not feel it. At some point the house lights would dim and a voice, Humphrey devoutly hoped his, would speak across the footlights and Gabe would forget all this nonsense about green and growing things.

In spite of Humphrey's intense and almost constant irritation at Gabe, his great disappointment in him, there was a tie between a man and his son. The one who would carry on his name, produce his descendants. But it was more than that. An indefinable unconscious bond.

Humphrey decided to follow his hair massage with brushing. He reached for his brush. His hand stopped short of the dressing-table drawer. It was open, about an inch. He was always meticulous about closing drawers tightly. Gabe was not.

"Did you open my drawer?"

Gabe looked up from his hands. "You were later than I thought. I was going to write you a note and go on to the party for the cast. Brenna said I had to go, and I have to get up early to bird-watch in the park."

The gun was in the drawer. The box of chocolates. No reason why Gabe should think anything of the chocolates. But the gun? Did Gabe see that? Unless he did, Humphrey shouldn't mention it. But if he did?

Humphrey said tentatively, "I was just worried because there were some props in the drawer."

Gabe nodded casually. "You mean the gun?"

"It's for the scene in the third act. You know, where the Nazi captain——"

"I know."

"It's not loaded, naturally."

THAT was stupid. Suppose Gabe checked? Would Gabe know that much about a gun? He would know a prop gun wouldn't be kept here. Stop explaining. What is he thinking about, sitting there cracking his knuckles? His knuckles, probably. Or some wretched bird in that infernal park. No reason for him to suspect anything is wrong. Nothing is wrong yet. I won't use the gun. That's all.

But some vague uneasiness lingered in the silence between them.

Gabe said abruptly, "Uncle Japhet's here."

Humphrey kept his face pleasant, his tone expressing a civility he did not feel. "Here in New York? What for?"

"A convention. Some sort of a chemistry society thing. He's an officer in it, you know."

The only thing Humphrey knew about Japhet was that he emerged from the darkest depths of Iowa at the most inconsiderate times to disrupt Humphrey's life.

As Humphrey had become successful, it had been excellent publicity, discreetly mentioned, that he should help Peg's brilliant younger brother, Japhet, with his education. But naturally Humphrey had expected Japhet Briggs to have the good taste thereafter to retire from his life.

Humphrey said carefully, "Has Brenna asked Japhet to stay at the house?"

"Yes, sir. You don't mind?"

"Why should I mind?"

"You don't like Uncle Japhet, do you?"

Humphrey reflected that all babies, especially all boy babies, should be put in a glass box at birth and released only when they were at least twenty-five. "Certainly I like him. Why should I dislike him?"

Why indeed? Japhet, at the age of thirty, was internationally known for his research in the field of some tropical epidemic; Humphrey always forgot the name of it. Japhet's own gaunt, pain-racked body was the living testimony to the fact that he had tried his early serum on himself, unsuccessfully, suffering instead the ravages of the disease.

Personally Humphrey's opinion of human nature was not high enough to be concerned about saving the lives of millions of Africans or Indians. The world plainly already had too many people in it; it was necessary to kill the excess by wars that were very unsettling to the theatre. Why work to increase the population?

"Haven't I always been nice to Japhet?" he asked Gabe.

"Oh, yes, sir."

Humphrey wished that private schools nowadays did not teach children to sir their young fathers. "Is Japhet coming to the party tonight?"

"Yes, sir. He had a meeting, but he's promised to meet us there."

No reason why Japhet should interfere with Humphrey's plans. No reason at all. Humphrey removed his make-up, working with the muscles of the face. Gabe fidgeted, cracking his knuckles. Finally he said politely, "If you don't mind, sir——"

"Run along," said Humphrey coldly.

For the first time in hours, Humphrey was alone. He drew a deep breath. The worst was past. It had not been the planning, nor would it be the actual doing. But the waiting, where each word had to be weighed, each expression. The matter of keeping routine, down to the smallest detail.

He changed his clothes very fast. Gabe had taken up most of the ten minutes Humphrey usually allowed for dressing. The weather report had said rain, the fact of which had been confirmed by the people who had come backstage.

Humphrey slid the box of chocolates into the pocket of his raincoat. He weighed the .32 carefully in his hand. Probably he would not have used it, anyway. Poison was simpler. Much simpler. But he put the gun into the other pocket of his raincoat. Unforeseen circumstances might arise where he would need it. No harm to have it along. After all, no one would ever question Gabe as to his having seen it.

As he passed, Humphrey tapped on Brenna's door to indicate that he was leaving. He did not wait for her. They never left the theatre together. She always drove home with the chauffeur, while Humphrey took his nightly walk up Broadway, his solitary whisky at Pernaud's on the avenue.

At the stage door Humphrey turned up the collar of his raincoat. He was always very careful of his throat. He loved rain, however, often walking in it. He pulled his hat down. He stepped out of the doorway.

A hand clutched his arm. He saw a tall, thin girl of perhaps twenty, dressed in atrocious taste, with cheap fake bracelets, fake earrings, a shabby cloth coat, and—horror of horrors—a hat trimmed with purple feathers.

She stood stock-still, breathing heavily. She said, in a tone of utmost awe and wonder, "Humphrey Ward!"

It was touching that she should have remained over an hour at the stage door of the now-deserted theatre, standing in her thin, toeless shoes on the wet pavement. Touching, too, that the very sight of him should evoke such emotion in her.

Humphrey had once been a stage-struck youngster himself, haunting stage doors. He prided himself, as he often said in his publicity interviews, on treating these youngsters with a consideration with which he himself had not been treated.

He gave her his best smile. He patted her thin hand on his arm, wincing as the bracelets jangled, reflecting that she apparently did not get much to eat. He said, "Did you enjoy the play?"

"Oh, Mr. Ward!"

He noted impersonally that she had a very unusual face. She was far too thin; the bones in her long neck stuck out pathetically. But they were beautiful bones, in a bold way. He found himself thinking of the effect of lights hitting them. She had, he realised, one of the most structurally beautiful faces he had ever seen, while lacking entirely the delicacy, the innate prettiness that Brenna, for instance, had.

This girl's eyes were her best feature—large, dark, wonderfully expressive. Indeed, her whole face, despite its common quality, was mobile, expressive. Her adoration of Humphrey was written all over it; no director could have asked for more.

Her voice, however, was very nasal, her diction quite bad.

Humphrey said the standard words, "Have you had any stage experience?"

"I've only been in New York ten days. I've stood up for 'Gallant Resistance' five times this week. Oh, Mr. Ward! If I could only learn to act like you!"

He had been considering that in "The Dark Wind" next fall she might fill a small part which called for a sexy, ordinary young girl. It amused him occasionally to play God, and it was of course excellent publicity. How good you are, Humphrey, how kind.

But this girl's strikingly boned face would stand out in a part that was meant to be unobtrusive. He lost all interest in her immediately, wanting only to get on with his real business of the evening.

He noted that Brenna had come out behind them and was listening. He said, looking pointedly at his watch — past midnight!—"Would you like me to sign your programme?"

"Oh, Mr. Ward! Would you

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★ As I read the stars ★ By EVE HILLIARD ★

ARIES (March 21-April 20): April 13 is a typical Aries day, since it offers high rewards for hard work and enterprise. April 16 bristles with difficulties, but April 18 is fortunate.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): Money matters may boost the morale, April 14, through unexpected channels. April 18 is too precious to waste. Get paper and pencil for plans.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): Meetings — romantic, social, or in the club—are likely to be stormy, April 13. Avoid taking drastic action, April 16. Thereafter conditions improve.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): While the evening of April 14 inclines towards group activities, dancing, entertainment, April 17 is fine for sporting interests, outings.

LEO (July 23-August 22): Short journeys, April 18, are likely to be the occasion of minor mishaps or disappointing episodes. April 19 more than compensates.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Determination will enable you to triumph over disabilities, opposition, April 13. The weekend beams on short holiday trips.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Domestic harmony, pleasant relations with workmates or associates make April 14 smooth sailing, with April 18 a day for lovers, young and old.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Any matter concerned with occupation flourishes, April 13. Important decisions may mark April 16, bringing changes in the near future.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): Be particularly careful what you say, or do, April 15. Make no rash promises. April 16, you may be called upon to perform an act of kindness. Do it willingly.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Housekeepers may find April 13 extra busy, with plans promptly carried out. Changes, improvements are likely to be features of April 17.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Finalise your undertakings, April 15. The next few days are likely to bring visits from relatives or neighbors, particularly April 17.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Commonsense should triumph over crazy schemes, April 15, but results should surpass expectation, April 16-19, when you travel new roads.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatever for the statements contained in it.]

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It amazes me that some women are still distressed by the problem of superfluous hair. There's no need to worry these days, now you can literally *cream* away the hair — and quickly, too. I know there's a great temptation to use a razor, but do remember that razors make hair grow faster and coarser. They scrape tender skin and you're left with noticeable stubble. But the amazing cream called Veet removes all hair in three minutes, leaving skin silken smooth! Summer and winter legs must be Veet smooth. Bare, hairy legs look so ugly and the glamorous effect of sheer stockings is ruined if hair shows through. So get Veet, at all chemists and stores.

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Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

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put on it, 'for Francys Maguire'?"

He wrote it with his customary large and flourishing publicity signature. He gave her his best publicity smile. He moved on quite definitely. He heard Brenna's friendly voice behind him, saying to the girl, "Would you like me to sign it too?"

But Francys Maguire was not interested in Brenna. She did not even answer her. Probably she did not even hear her. Francys ran dangerously along the wet pavement after Humphrey.

"Mr. Ward! Couldn't I—wouldn't it be all right if I walked a little way with you? Just a block, even? I don't know anybody in New York and—just to talk about the theatre?"

This showed what came of kindness to these people. Humphrey opened his mouth for an icy refusal. He said, instead, formally, "I'm sorry. My wife and I are going to a party Mr. Meinhart, the producer, is giving for the cast."

"Oh, Mr. Ward!" she breathed.

He helped Brenna into the car, got in beside her. He told the chauffeur to drive around the next block, let him out a few blocks farther up Broadway.

Brenna's smile sympathised with his predicament, but also with Francys Maguire. "Poor girl! She looked hungry. Probably living in a cheap little room somewhere. Couldn't we take her to the party with us?"

"In a hat with purple feathers?" Humphrey asked, scandalised.

Again, finally, Humphrey was alone. Striding up Broadway in the rain, past the cabarets, brightly aglow, loud with cheap music. He loved every inch of it, loved its vulgarity, its impossibility, though nowadays he would not for worlds have subjected himself to it in person.

Now his interests were his renowned modern art collection, the opera, the symphony. Gone long since were the days when he had hung about such places as these, drinking beer, not whisky. He had painstakingly and deliberately made himself into a man of taste and discrimination.

He walked a block. He kept his head down, in the rain, as he hailed a cab. The cab was a calculated risk, for he was well known, but the time element being what it was, he had no choice except to take the risk. He must be back at Pernaud's for his late-evening drink at exactly the time he would normally have been able to walk there from the theatre.

By taking a cab both ways, he could stay at Rachel's a full twenty minutes. He knew this exactly, for he had done it every evening he had gone to see Rachel, for the six months since her return to New York.

Making his voice indistinguishable, he gave the address of a small hotel nearly two blocks from Rachel's. On arrival, he thrust at the cabby the exact change plus a reasonable tip—not large enough or small enough to invite later remembrance. He ducked off into the rain, confident that the driver had not seen his face.

At past midnight on a rainy night, no one was in the street before him. He came to the lighted entrance of Rachel's building, a beautiful stone-and-glass one overlooking the East River.

By now the doorman was off duty. The lobby was deserted. Standing in the shadows just outside the door, Humphrey watched the indicator hands above the two elevators. One was stationary at the sixth floor. The other was at the fourteenth floor, coming down. He slipped in to push the button for the elevator which was not in use. He watched the hand indicating its descent. Six . . . five . . . four. . . .

The elevator arrived, its doors sliding open. He was in it at once, pressing the ninth-floor button. Just as the doors shut, slowly, he heard the other elevator reach the ground floor, spilling out its laughing people a few feet from him. They couldn't have seen him. The lobby had been the greatest danger. Now he was safe. No one would ever know he had been there.

Rachel's hall was empty, as it had been a safe gamble that it would be at this late hour. Humphrey took a moment to be sure that the window in the hall to the fire escape was open. It ran past Rachel's bedroom. Not that he anticipated the need for an emergency exit, but it was always handy to have one available just in case.

HUMPHREY rang Rachel's bell. Rachel always kept everybody waiting. He wondered what role she would be playing tonight. Last time it had been "Camille." Tonight it was "Old Roses." She flung the door open dramatically; trust Rachel to do anything dramatically. She was even dressed as she had been in the final scene of that play: a sequined dress, tight at her no-longer-slim waist, pale green to set off her darkness, with ribbons of mink at the neck and on the peacock skirt.

She stood there, arms extended, the light coming over her shoulder in exactly the right manner. For a moment he could almost see Rachel as she had been when he first met her, years ago. In those days Rachel had been the big star and he a nondescript bit player.

He kissed her. She expected it, though it meant nothing now. Her skin was lined beneath his lips, yellowed by the liver ailment with which she had recently been afflicted.

She reached up to smooth his hair with both hands, slowly, lovingly, another meaningless gesture from the past.

"You're late," she said, pouting. "Over an hour."

"Closing night. A lot of hands to shake."

Rachel's dark eyes clouded. He knew that she was thinking, as always, of herself, her own starring days. She could not bear the thought of his, or anybody else's, having what she could have no longer. But she turned away, managing her skirt with her old dancer's grace. She said gaily, "Let's forget it now, Humph. You're here."

"Yes." He looked around Rachel's small but expensive apartment. He knew almost exactly what everything in it had cost. The bizarre impressionistic prints on the grey walls, the thick lemon-yellow carpeting underfoot, the smooth low lines of the—to Humphrey—uncomfortable functional furniture, the red decorator-made draperies framing the glass wall which faced the lights of the bridge and the barges passing on the East River.

He threw his raincoat carelessly over the chair beside the door. He had forgotten the gun was in the pocket. It thumped against the wall.

"What was that?" Rachel asked. "A present? You brought me a present?"

"In a way."

"Give it to me!" She was beside him reaching for the coat, greedy as always for a new possession.

His hands shook as he pushed her away. "Not now. Later."

"Now! Give it to me!"

He knew that neither words nor action would distract Rachel from a course once chosen. He stood between her and the coat, pushing her away with his right hand while with his left he fumbled behind him. He must get the gun before she could reach it. Rachel was not stupid. If she saw the gun, she would realise at once why he had brought it. And Rachel was not one to freeze with terror. She would take instant and effective counteraction. The police.

Humphrey was sweating. He was smiling at Rachel, pretending to be teasing her. He was pushing away her fingers, clawing at him. And his left hand was groping behind him. Frantically. He found the pocket, finally. His fingers touched only the chocolate box. For an instant he thought that the bump against the wall might have jarred the gun loose. It might be on the carpet. His fingers crossed the coat swiftly to the other pocket. At last they touched something cold, hard. Then they were closing around the gun.

Now. Do it now. Don't waste the time on preliminaries. Rachel will find out what you're planning. You'll be ruined. Finished. Never mind your plan. Do it now.

Sternly he fought his rising panic. Panic was what trapped other people, what he was determined would not trap him. He would do this calmly, as he had planned.

He slid the gun into his pocket. He let Rachel push him back now, watched her fingers prowl greedily in the pockets of his raincoat. She found the chocolates, staring at the box in puzzlement.

"Was this it?"

"Certainly."

Rachel's dark eyes narrowed. "But it didn't sound like a cardboard box. It was a harder thump."

"The chair bumped the wall." He moved across the room, ostensibly to watch the lights of a boat some distance away on the river. He noted, impersonally, that even the best-laid plans could not be carried out unemotionally. He had been so sure that he would be cool, that it would mean nothing to him. But that was a near thing. If she had found the gun!

Rachel said, "These days you pride yourself so much on your taste. This is just Guzman's. Cheap drugstore chocolates, that you can get any place."

Precisely. Guzman's. Sold everywhere. A box whose purchase could never be traced.

"Not even a kind I like! You know I hate fruit centres!"

Only the peppermints, Rachel. I don't want you to like the rest. I took a good deal of care to get something you didn't like, in the rest of the box, so you would be sure to eat only the peppermints. The very specially prepared peppermints.

He said, "I'm sorry. By the time I could get away, all the other shops were closed, and I thought even this was better than nothing."

Rachel threw the box on the couch. "You know I never eat anything I don't like!"

I know that, Rachel. I'm counting on it.

He picked the box up, opened it. It was badly disarranged by her throwing it. He straightened it as well as he could. "These

To page 67

IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY — BY RUD

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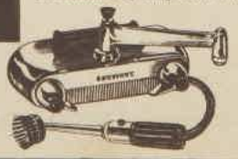

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do seem to be fruits. There are a few peppermints, though. You always loved peppermints."

"Not that kind of peppermints! They've probably been on the counter for weeks!"

He knew better than to push the point. One never pushed Rachel. Instead, he put the opened box on the coffee table in front of her. He sat beside her on the couch, leaning back and closing his eyes. "It's so good to sit down."

"For a while," said Rachel. "But let's not be late for the party. I'm feeling much better tonight. I've decided to go to Meinhart's with you."

Any other night he would have refused flatly. Of course he could not take Rachel, especially in view of their past connection, to a party where Brenna was waiting for him. But tonight he did not argue with her about it. He did not even open his eyes. Rachel was not going to the party or anywhere else. Ever again.

He thought of her sadly, with almost some of the old tenderness. But the triumph in her voice shattered his mood completely. "I'm glad you're finally coming to your senses. At first, when I came back six months ago, I was so sick, I didn't care. But now——"

At first you were so shocked at the end of your long movie career that you couldn't bear to face people. Now you've decided you're going to, again. And I'm elected to take you.

"I'm glad you realise where your true loyalties lie," she was saying. "That blond Laugharn girl——"

"Leave Brenna out of this!"

"Yes, Humph. I'll be as sweet as pie to her."

"I'm sure you will."

Rachel was watching him. She leaned forward, fumbling in the box of chocolates. She took a peppermint, held it in her hand, still watching him. "Do you feel all right?"

Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

from page 65

"Certainly I feel all right!"

"You don't seem natural."

"Why don't I?"

"Look, Humph. I'm Rachel. Remember me? I knew you when you didn't have the price of a meal. When you were hanging around stage doors to look at me. I took you from that. I gave you your start."

"I know. I've tried to show my gratitude."

"Gratitude. You don't know what the word means. Remember I knew you when your fingernails were dirty, and your grammar wasn't too good. You may fool the world with all this veneer you've put on. Or Brenna Laugharn. But it doesn't fool me. Art collections and music and culture—that isn't you, Humph. You didn't even finish high school. And none of this sweetness-and-light act fools me either."

Her voice was hard now, harsh. "You're never kind unless you can get something by pretending to be kind. You're never sweet or generous. What little you do for me isn't because you're grateful. You do it because you have to, because I know too much and wouldn't be afraid to use it. You may do it with a smile like now, but you hate every minute of it. Gratitude! When I think that I gave you my youth!"

He tried to remember how it had been when they first met. The thrill it had been to be chosen, for whatever reason, her leading man!

She had given him the break he might never have got otherwise. She had taught him the rudiments, not of acting but of stage wisdom. He had been happy to dance on her the attendance she had demanded, to say the false flattering words. Or had they been false, originally? He did not know. It was so long ago. He only knew that they had long since become false, that the ties between them had ended completely.

She never did anything for me. Not really. It was for herself. To have a young man at her side, at her beck and call. She would phone me in the middle of the night to go out and search New York for a bunch of violets for her.

She's had one peppermint. I didn't see her eat it, but she must have. Two might be enough poison to be fatal. Three, for safety. She didn't notice any taste, apparently. If I can only keep her sitting here talking, with the chocolates in front of her, she'll reach out again, as she always does, take another. But it has to be before the first dose of poison can make her sick.

NOW he was sweating. But he said carefully, "You're just upset because I'm late tonight, Rachel."

"Tonight! How long has it been since you were here? Since you took me anywhere?"

"We'll go to Meinhart's party. After I've rested a little. We'll start again and forget the past."

She leaned forward, her hands on her knees. "You're never like this unless you want something, Humph. What is it?"

He shut his eyes wearily. He had resolved that he would make no last try, would not go over the fruitless argument they had been over so many times. Yet with her here beside him he did try again.

"I'm not denying the debt I owe you, Rachel. I'm sorry you're sick and broke. But I've tried to repay you. I've given you everything you've wanted."

"Money! I could always get money."

Not any more you can't, Rachel. You're no character actress. All you had was connected with youth. You can't get any more money now, except from me. Unless you're blackmailing somebody else, too.

"The kind of money you spend," he said, "nobody can get. It's got to stop, Rachel. I can't keep this up. With taxes, my own home, Gabe—"

"Brenna?" she mocked.

"Leave Brenna out of this!"

"Don't you shout at me, Humph Ward!"

"But if you'd just realise I can't keep on—I make thousands each week, and my bank account is nearly always overdrawn."

Rachel spread her mink-roped skirt about her maliciously. "Like my dress? I bought it especially for tonight."

He gave up. It was hopeless. It had always been hopeless. What he was going to do tonight, he should have done the day Rachel returned to New York from Hollywood. From here on, the path could only lead downward for Rachel. And she would not take it alone. He could either resign himself to taking it with her or remove her entirely from his life. And there was only one way of doing that.

He felt better now. His resolve was stronger than ever, after its momentary weakening. He drew a deep breath. He smiled at Rachel. "I always liked you in green."

Rachel reached for another peppermint. Her hand wavered over the box. He leaned back and shut his eyes. When he opened them, she was chewing something. She said mockingly, "So you like my dress. Have you yielded to the inevitable, then?"

He sat, unmoving, beside her. "Yes."

"That's good. Because I've had enough of this back-streets business. From here on, you're going to acknowledge me openly."

"And if I don't?"

Rachel sighed. "Gabe's a fine boy, isn't he? Too bad if he should learn his father killed his mother."

"I didn't kill Peg! It was an accident. She fell and struck her head!"

"You strangled her. In cold blood, because she had the effrontery to fall in love with another man."

"No!"

"If she fell, why didn't you just call the police and tell them what happened? Why was her body found in the park?"

"I got panicky. I was afraid of the publicity."

"If you had nothing to conceal," said Rachel shrewdly, "why would you be paying me not to tell what I know? Can you prove I'm not telling the truth?"

There was no way he could prove anything. He knew Rachel had employed detectives to piece the story together, but he did not know what proof she had actually found. It would not matter. She had only to voice her suspicions. Humphrey Ward Branded as Wife-Killer—he could see the headlines.

Rachel took another peppermint. Three should be enough poison. She had had two. Just talk long enough for her to eat one more.

Suddenly he wanted Rachel's last moments to be pleasant ones. He said softly, "You look now just as you looked in 'Old Roses.' Do you remember that scene on the sofa, in the second act? I always thought it was the best thing I ever saw you do. I'll never forget your laughter."

Rachel's eyes lit up happily. "Yes. And do you remember how I——"

She was in her element now, talking about her days of greatness. There was no apparent pain, no struggle, no realisation. Her head simply drooped forward, slowly. Her breathing stopped. She was dead.

Humphrey sat looking at her for several moments. It had been as easy as this, then. And to avoid this simple scene, he had endured the years of silent fear, of intermittent financial drain, of surreptitious meetings, of dread of discovery. He put Rachel's head back, almost tenderly. He moved the lamp a little to the left. He did not want her last scene to be played in the glare of a pitiless white light.

He thought of folding her hands, but that, of course, was impossible. He hoped the police might think her death was suicide—despondency over ill-health, he believed was the usual wording. But what the police thought was no affair of his.

He had been very careful. To make sure Rachel kept no records, that all their money dealings were in cash. A few people might have seen him going or coming from Rachel's, but not many.

At any rate, he was known as an old colleague of hers. She had been in Hollywood for many years. There was nothing to connect him especially with her now. He would walk out the door and vanish from Rachel's life—and her death—completely.

He remembered to flush away the rest of the peppermints. Four were gone. Rachel had had one more than he had thought. He wiped his fingerprints from everything he had touched: the lamp, the coffee table, the door-knob. He straightened the cushion behind Rachel. He put on his raincoat. He went back to the sofa to check, to be sure that all was as he had planned it. He had left nothing. No clues, no traces.

He listened inside the door. He opened it a crack. The hall was empty. He stepped forth confidently, shutting the door carefully behind him. It was done. Over. Past. He was free. Forever.

A thin hand clutched his arm suddenly. A voice said, "Oh, Mr. Ward!"

Standing before him, in the shabby coat and hat with purple feathers, was the girl with the brown eyes. Francys Maguire. She had seen him come out of the apartment where tomorrow

To page 75

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Careful shoppers look for the OSMAN name-tab. Osman sheets and pillowcases are not only smooth and of generous size, but will wear beautifully and keep their good appearance through countless washings. Firmly finished, with hemstitching or cording (in white or six elegant colours) OSMAN sheets and pillowcases are the choice of all women who appreciate beauty and quality. Choose them in economical American cotton or superfine Egyptian. There are prices to suit all purses.

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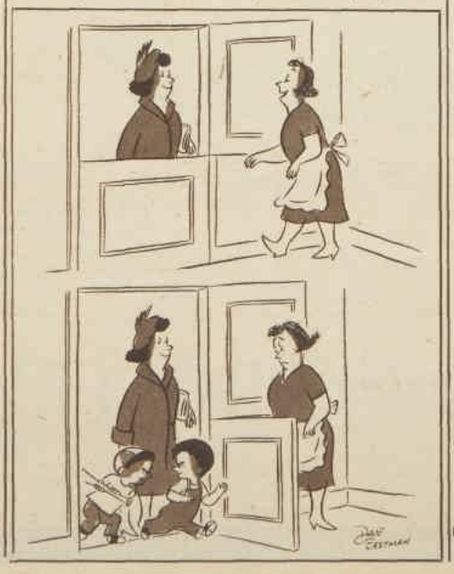

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Easter PATTERN

YOUR best china and silverware, candles and a charming arrangement of flowers add appeal to a delicious dinner such as this. See Menu 1 on this page.

Let this year's pattern for Easter Sunday be a simple dinner, elegantly served.

AN oven-cooked dinner which requires little attention while cooking is a wise choice so that the homemaker can enjoy her day as well as family and guests.

A platter of hors d'oeuvres like the one illustrated can be prepared in less than five minutes. Celery curls are cut the day before, so all that has to be done at the last minute is to arrange the stuffed olives, black olives, and celery on a platter.

Sweets and green vegetables for both menus can be prepared the day before and kept in the refrigerator. Wrap vegetables in clear plastic food-wrapping.

Serve food at correct temperatures and garnish attractively and your dinner is sure to be a success.

All spoon measurements in our recipes are level.

MENU 1

Hors d'oeuvres, olives, and celery

Baked leg of pork, red apples, gravy

Baked potatoes and pumpkin, green peas, carrot rings

Lemon queen pudding

Coffee

BAKED LEG OF PORK

Wipe meat with clean, damp cloth, score rind with sharp-pointed knife if butcher has not done so. Place in baking-dish, add melted fat to pan to a depth of ¼in. Brush rind with oil or melted fat. Bake in very moderate oven, allowing 30 to 40 minutes' cooking time for each pound of meat. Brush rind with oil or melted fat several times while cooking; do not baste. Thoroughly dry vegetables and lightly dredge with salt, add for last ¾ hour cooking time. Make gravy in usual way.

BAKED RED APPLES

Wash, dry, and core small red apples. Stand in shallow dish, barely cover base of dish with water. Place ½ of butter on top of each and 1 or 2 cloves. Bake in very moderate oven until tender. Serve garnished with parsley sprigs.

LEMON QUEEN PUDDING

One pint milk, 2 tablespoons powdered milk, 3 eggs, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 cup stale cake crumbs, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind, 3 or 4 tablespoons lemon butter, extra 2 tablespoons sugar.

Warm milk, add powdered milk, sugar, 2 eggs and 1 egg-yolk, beat well. Fold in cake crumbs and lemon rind. Fill into ovenproof dish, stand in dish of warm water, bake in moderate oven 40 to 45 minutes until set. Spread top with lemon butter. Beat remaining egg-white to meringue consistency with extra sugar, pipe or spoon on to pudding. Return to oven until set and lightly browned. Decorate with colored sugar or jelly crystals, cherries, and lemon leaves.

MENU 2

Salmon and cucumber canapes

Baked stuffed corner of topside, brown gravy

Baked potatoes and pumpkin

Cheese-topped tomatoes, French beans

Pineapple and passionfruit cream

Coffee

SALMON AND CUCUMBER CANAPES

Two dozen fried-bread croutons or small savory biscuits, 1 small tin salmon, ¼ cup chopped cucumber, squeeze lemon juice, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, salt, pepper to taste, parsley to garnish.

Remove skin and bone from salmon, flake finely. Mix lightly with cucumber, lemon juice, and mayonnaise, season with salt and pepper. Pile on to savory croutons or biscuits. Garnish with parsley sprigs.

BAKED STUFFED TOPSIDE

A 3½lb. to 4lb. corner piece of topside, 2½ cups soft breadcrumbs, ½ teaspoon salt, pinch pepper, 2 tablespoons finely chopped onion, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, ¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind, pinch herbs, 1 dessertspoon melted margarine or butter, little milk, fat for baking.

Cut a deep pocket in steak, wipe all over with clean damp cloth. Combine seasoning ingredients, mixing well. Fill into pocket, sew or skewer opening together. Place in baking-dish, fat side up. Add sufficient melted fat to cover base of dish to depth of ⅛in. Bake in very moderate oven 1¾ to 2 hours, basting frequently. Add prepared potatoes and pumpkin for last ¾ hour of cooking time. Serve with gravy made in the usual way.

CHEESE-TOPPED TOMATOES

Cover cut side of halved tomatoes with equal quantities of soft breadcrumbs and grated cheese. Dot with butter or substitute, season lightly. Bake in moderate oven until tomatoes are tender and tops lightly browned.

PINEAPPLE AND PASSIONFRUIT CREAM

Quarter cup passionfruit pulp, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 pkt. pineapple jelly, 1 cup boiling water, ½ cup evaporated milk, 3 or 4 rings cooked or tinned pineapple, cherries.

Arrange halved pineapple slices and cherries in base of wetted mould. Dissolve pineapple jelly in boiling water, cool. Spoon 2 or 3 tablespoons into mould, allow to set. When balance of jelly is beginning to thicken, add whipped, thoroughly chilled evaporated milk, sugar, and passionfruit pulp. Beat until thick and creamy. Fill into prepared mould, chill until set. Unmould, serve with cream.

by our Food and Cookery Experts

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Vegemite is a rich source of vitamin B_1, B_2 and Niacin because it's a pure yeast extract . . . not an ordinary vegetable extract. Yeast is the richest known source of this precious vitamin B group, all of which keep your family strong and healthy.

So give your family Vegemite *daily* — delicious for all kinds of sandwiches and snacks. Vegemite also adds flavour and vitamins to cooked vegetables, soups, stews, gravies and casseroles. Available everywhere in 2, 4, 6, 8 and 16 oz. sizes.

Remember! One 4 oz. jar of Vegemite contains more Vitamin B_1, B_2 and Niacin than all these foods together! *2 loaves bread; 1 lb. steak; 1 lb. peas; 1 lb. potatoes; 1 bunch carrots; 1 lettuce; 6 apples; 6 pears; 2 pints milk; 2 plates porridge; 6 bananas; 12 eggs!*

PUT VEGEMITE NEXT TO THE PEPPER AND SALT WHENEVER YOU SET THE TABLE!

Ask for **VEGEMITE**

MADE BY KRAFT

MIXTURE of cake crumbs, coconut, condensed milk, and flavorings tops the apple pulp in these attractive apple baskets. See recipe below.

PRIZE RECIPES

Apple baskets, which are decorative on an afternoon-tea table and delicious to eat, win the main prize of £5 this week.

CONSOLATION prizes of £1 each are awarded to a tasty oven-cooked fish dish and hamburgers served in tomato sauce.

Spoon measurments in all our recipes are level.

APPLE BASKETS

Four ounces shortcrust pastry, cooked apple pulp, 4 tablespoons coconut, 6 tablespoons stale cake crumbs, 3 tablespoons condensed milk ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind, 1 dessertspoon sweet sherry, whipped cream, cherries to decorate.

Roll pastry thinly, cut with fluted cutter and line patty-tins. Twist thin pastry strips for basket handles, shape into curves on oven tray. Bake pastry cases and handles in hot oven 10-12 minutes. When cold half fill cases with apple pulp. Combine coconut, cake crumbs, condensed milk, lemon rind, and sherry. Fill into pastry cases on top of apple pulp. Pipe a rose of whipped cream on each, and top with a cherry. Arrange handles in position.

First Prize of £5 to Mrs. S. Campbell, R.M.B. 7A, Wherrol Flat, via Wingham, N.S.W.

FISH AND TOMATO PIE

Four ounces macaroni, ¾lb. cooked fish, 1 cup white sauce, pepper and salt to taste, 2 tomatoes, 2 tablespoons soft white breadcrumbs, grated rind and juice of 1 lemon, little grated cheese.

Cook macaroni in usual way until soft. Drain. Grease an ovenware dish, line with a layer of macaroni. Flake cooked fish, place one layer of fish over macaroni. Cover with a little white sauce and skinned sliced tomatoes; season to taste. Continue with these layers until dish is full. Finally top with a layer of breadcrumbs. Sprinkle with lemon juice, lemon rind, and grated cheese, bake 20 minutes. Serve hot.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Miss A. Perks, 37 Leichhardt St., Leichhardt, N.S.W.

ITALIAN PATTIES

One pound minced steak, cup soft white breadcrumbs soaked in ½ cup milk, 1 egg, 1 finely chopped onion, minced clove of garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, good pinch pepper, 1 or 2 tablespoons chopped green pepper, 4oz. grated cheese, 1 tin tomato soup (or depending on quantity of sauce required).

Combine all ingredients except soup. Form into patties, dredge with flour. Heat little fat in pan, and brown meat patties on both sides. Remove patties from pan, drain off fat, and clean pan. Place patties back in pan, pour tomato soup over patties, and simmer for 10 minutes. Extra grated cheese may be added to the tomato soup to give a piquant flavor to the gravy.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. W. Parker, 56 Hemmant Terrace, Milton, Brisbane.

COLORFUL BLUEBIRDS in novel designs are given on American Vogart embroidery transfer pattern No. 194. The patterns are made so that the days of the week may be used as part of a design, or, if preferred, they can be snipped off so that you will have a series of bright motifs for aprons, curtains, breakfast cloths, and potholders. The transfer sheet measures 24 x 28in., price 2/6. Orders should be sent to our Needlework Department. See address page 73.

Kitchen Hints

WHEN making apple fritters try dipping apple slices in castor sugar and lemon juice before coating with batter.

★ ★ ★

A LITTLE finely chopped or grated onion and sugar works wonders with the flavor of tartare sauce.

★ ★ ★

USE up the last of your jams or marmalades as a topping for baked apples.

★ ★ ★

A TEASPOON of sugar helps bring out the flavor of other ingredients in casserole dishes, curries, and other casseroles.

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Spoons and forks, particularly, need at least weekly care. Good taste demands that they be sparkling always.

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NEW HANDKNITS

Everyone who knits will need The Australian Women's Weekly Knitting Book. It contains the cream of the designs for winter wardrobes.

THREE of the smartly styled handknits from the 1954 Knitting Book are shown here.

This wonderful 48-page book, which costs only 1/6, is crammed with high-fashion designs for every member of the family. Many are illustrated in color.

Attractive patterns for crocheted garments are also included.

The collection of exclusive French designs in baby wear is delightful. There's a hooded jacket with deep-cuffed bootees to match, and a cleverly designed slip-on cape that every mother will want to make. The range also includes modesties, a grand French idea. These are superior to pilchers because of the wide, banded tops which reach well above the waistline and supply that extra warmth so necessary to baby's comfort and well-being in winter-time.

An overcoat for little boys, designed on tailored lines with a matching cap, will also interest young mothers, as well as a Paris-styled jacket and skirt for girls of five to seven years of age.

A bedjacket, frothy-looking with its lacy frills, will appeal to all women.

You will also find directions for making an American-styled three-piece suit, day blouses, evening blouses and evening cardigans, some of them decorated with glittering sequins, and all kinds of sweaters and jerseys for every-day or special wear.

Three specially selected garments for men are included in the range.

Get your copy now from your newsagent or bookstall or from any of our city offices for only 1/6.

SHRUG JACKET (above): Knitted in double crepe wool, this elegantly styled jacket features the new "chicken-leg" sleeves. Directions for making it are in our 1954 Knitting Book, now on sale.

EVENING CARDIGANS (right): The black cardigan is worked in a lacy pattern; the white one simulates Irish crochet. Directions for both are in The Australian Women's Weekly 1954 Knitting Book, 1/6 at newsagents, bookstalls, or our offices.

THE Rh BLOOD FACTOR

By SISTER MARY JACOB, Our Mothercraft Nurse

So much is heard today of the Rh factor in certain types of blood that it is a secret source of worry to many expectant mothers.

IT may be helpful, therefore, to state a few facts about this subject.

Extensive blood-tests made in recent years show that the Rh factor is a substance which about 85 per cent. of white people have in their blood. The remaining 15 per cent. lack this factor.

When this substance is present, the blood is said to be Rh positive, and when absent, Rh negative.

Some blood-groups are incompatible; this is why the main blood-groups have been given the names A, B, O. In cases of accident, haemorrhages, or other causes it is important that any necessary transfusion be of the same blood-group or one which is compatible.

During pregnancy, blood-tests are taken, and after long research it has been discovered that if the mother's blood is Rh negative and that of her husband positive, it may lead to trouble.

If the husband's blood is negative and the mother's positive, or if both are negative or positive, this trouble does not occur. Even when the two blood-groups are incompatible (the mother's negative and the husband's positive), there is usually no trouble with a first baby, and often not with the second, and in quite a number of cases no trouble arises at all.

Briefly, what happens is that the developing baby receives this Rh positive factor from its father and begins to reproduce Rh positive blood. Some of this blood-substance produced by the baby gets into the mother's circulation, and this being a "foreign" substance, that is, an incompatible blood-group, the mother's blood begins to make a substance called an "anti-body," to destroy this foreign substance.

These anti-bodies in the mother's blood enter the blood-stream of the developing baby and begin to destroy its red-blood cells. This results in the baby being jaundiced at birth or very anaemic. It may have internal haemorrhages, or can be still-born.

The first child is usually safely born and healthy because there is not enough of this substance in the mother's blood to affect it. However, in a second or third pregnancy, or if the mother has had a blood transfusion with Rh positive blood, the chances are that the baby may be infected with the larger amount of this substance, which the mother's blood has built up for its own protection.

As the proportion of Rh negative people is small and there are many cases of a negative Rh mother and positive Rh father having perfectly healthy babies, there need be no undue anxiety.

So much can be done now with blood transfusions and with other preventive treatment that, provided a negative Rh mother is under expert supervision and care throughout pregnancy and during childbirth, there is little if any danger.

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Fashion PATTERNS

FASHION PATTERNS and Needlework Notions may be obtained from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 645 Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 4060, G.P.O., Sydney). Tasmanian readers should address orders to Box 66-D, G.P.O., Hobart; New Zealand readers to Box 666, G.P.O., Auckland

F3140.—Girl's smartly tailored double-breasted overcoat. Sizes 20in., 23in., 27in., and 31in. lengths for 4, 6, 8, and 10 years. Requires 2¼yds. 54in. material and 2yds. braid. Price, 2/6.

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NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 645.—SMALL GIRL'S COAT AND MATCHING BONNET

The pretty little coat with its matching bonnet is obtainable cut out ready to make and includes easy-to-follow instructions. The material is a light-weight wool; the color choice includes strawberry, azure blue, mid-grey, and mid-green. Size 17in. for 1 year, coat, 19/6; bonnet, 7/3; complete set, 25/1. Size 18in. for 2 years, coat, 21/3; bonnet, 7/11; complete set, 28/6. Size 19in. length for 3 years, coat, 22/6; bonnet, 8/6; complete set, 29/9. Size 20in. for 4 years, coat, 24/9; bonnet, 8/3; complete set, 33/3. Postage and registration, 2/6 extra for complete set, 2/3 for coat, and 1/3 for bonnet.

No. 646.—ORGANDIE THROWOVER

The attractively designed throwover is clearly traced ready to embroider on good quality Swiss organdie. The color choice includes white, blue, lemon, pink, and green. The cloth measures 36in. x 36in. Price, 7/11. Postage, 9d. extra.

No. 647.—EMBROIDERED PILLOW-CASE

The pillow-cases are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider on cotton lawn in pastel shades of sky, green, pink, lemon, and also in white. Sizes 17in. x 28in. Price: Individual cases, 6/11 each. Postage, 9d. extra. Set of six, 39/6. Postage and registration, 3/3 extra.

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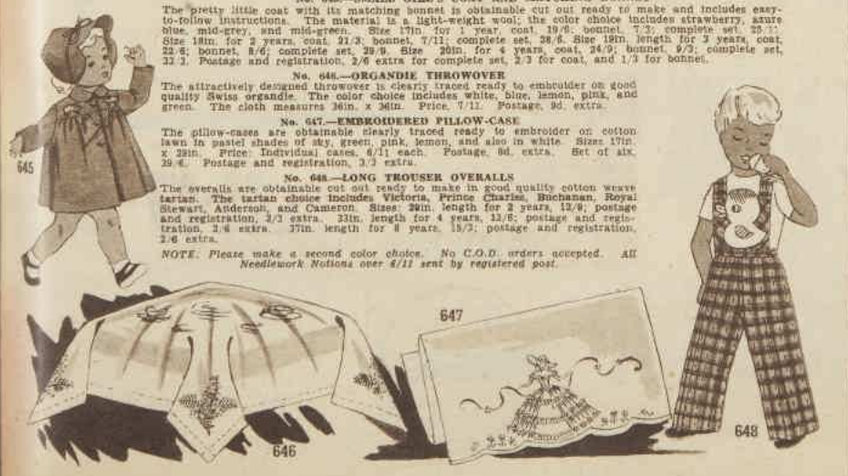
The overalls are obtainable cut out ready to make in good quality cotton weave tartan. The tartan choice includes Victoria, Prince Charles, Buchanan, Royal Stewart, Anderson, and Cameron. Sizes: 29in. length for 2 years, 12/9; postage and registration, 2/3 extra. 31in. length for 4 years, 13/6; postage and registration, 2/6 extra. 37in. length for 8 years, 15/3; postage and registration, 2/6 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 4/11 sent by registered post.



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Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

from page 67

Sabinson would be murdered.

man standing beside on the high windy ter- as gaunt, plainly from the s of disease. His hair had prematurely, his nor- tall body was bent. His nt cough racked his whole His face was dark, with ad flat nose, a too-long nd. His teeth were per- however, as he smiled, and yes behind his rimless were a warm hazel.

Japhet Briggs talked, one he humor, the intelligence his eyes and his smile. was the human quality him which one felt most ly. He leaned forward his long, capable hands ed before him. He looked he lights of New York, d far below him, without lly seeming to see them. st was his absorption in ject.

he had the feeling that sur- ings as such did not mat- ery much to this young that he would be equally ne here in the chic sur- ings of Max Meinhart's use, or in the white- ed atmosphere of his ex- ental laboratory, or among dian natives to whose wel- e was devoting his life.

nna shivered involuntar- in her chiffon-and-net gown. Japhet said in- "You're cold. You n't be such a good audi- I've run on and on. It's dangerous to ask a scien- bout his work. So few will listen to us. You be bored to death."

nna reached up to put her hand on his arm affec- ly.

t not really cold. And I to hear about your work, It's been almost a year we've seen you. Hum- will be so pleased too."

t's it time for Humphrey here?"

quite yet. He'll be getting to Pernaud's After his drink, he'll walk avenue to home—"

always know pretty plete he is, don't you, "

said anxiously, "Do you I overdo it? Do you I shouldn't know?"

Briggs laughed. "I Humphrey is a very man."

nna sighed.

s a great man, Japhet. A There are a few who can't see it yet; he should have got, and But he'll get them. rey is a growing actor— t part, each play, he er. He still hasn't his greatest heights. es even now a review rd, but it is always

Japhet Briggs, this is

She went on eagerly, "If you could see the letters he gets! From people whose whole lives were changed by seeing him play a part, even hearing him speak a few words. I know a great actor's life is different from other men's; I know his wife's has to be different from other women's. I don't want to be a possessive wife, but I try to do for him the small things that make him more comfortable and happier."

Japhet was regarding her steadily. As though feeling some explanation were called for, she said, "Things are important to Humphrey. Not money. He never has any of that. But things like the exact temperature of the soup, like his shoe rack being in perfect order, and the pillows on the sofa not mussed, and not having the wrong people bother him. At least I can keep the small annoyances of life from him, so he will only have to worry about the big ones."

"And the big ones, to Humphrey, mean a new play."

"Yes."

"Why the sigh? You've been serious all evening. Is anything wrong?"

"Nothing," she said quickly. "I—understand that the theatre is Humphrey's life. What it means to him. When he isn't in it, he's thinking about it. Naturally he puts it first. I knew that he did, when I married him."

Japhet put a gentle hand under her chin, turned her face so that her blue eyes met his. "You are happy with Humphrey, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Settle for that, Brenna. Don't expect the moon and stars. Few people get so much from life."

"You always do me good, Japhet. You see things so clearly."

"It's a scientist's business to see things clearly and try to find out what they mean. It's a pity that we can't put some of our findings to better use."

Brenna tucked her hand in his arm. "Japhet Briggs, this is a party. I will not have you feeling sad about the fate of mankind tonight. I want you to have pure fun."

Japhet smiled. "Sorry. It's just that there is so much to be done and so little time to do it."

"Well, you don't have to do it alone. You've already half killed yourself; it's a wonder you didn't die. Deliberately infecting yourself with a deadly disease to see if your serum worked! And you don't take any care of yourself at all."

"Now who's being serious? This is a party, Brenna. I want you to have pure fun."

She laughed up at him. Japhet Briggs' long, lank figure was incongruous beside her smallness. As he turned, there was about him something of Gabe's awkwardness.

Brenna said, "You do look like Gabe. It always surprises me, though I don't know why it should. Gabe's your nephew."

"Which reminds me. He did come to the party, too, didn't he? Where is he now? Has he finally reached the age of girls?"

Brenna shook her head. "He says he hates girls. And I just can't change his mind. I've tried so hard, parties, dancing school, daughters of Humphrey's friends. What should I do, Japhet?"

"Let him grow up. Not that anyone could stop him. Time takes care of a lot of things. If he doesn't like girls, where is he now?"

"He hates parties, too, but he loves to eat. He can eat anything anytime anywhere. Including nails and glass, Humphrey says. Since we made him come here, Gabe would see no

To page 76

"Wonder I'm starting at the bottom of—how many rungs has it got?"

Beauty in brief:

PEDICURE POINTERS

By CAROLYN EARLE

● You can learn to do a professional-looking pedicure at home by following a set plan of treatment and allowing yourself enough time to do a leisurely job. Here are the four steps involved:

SOAK your feet in warm water and scrub all surfaces with a firm brush to pep up circulation, remove flaked skin, and soften hard spots. Dry briskly and thoroughly, pressing back on nail cuticles.

● Massage with cream or oil. A mentholated cream is especially reviving. Massage by placing the thumbs on the instep and fingers underneath the foot, and draw firmly back along each tendon as if you were pulling on gloves.

Put an extra dab of cream or oil around each toenail and shape each cuticle back.

● Clip nails straight across, being careful not to curve down the corners or clip them so short that soft flesh at the sides is exposed. Clip cuticles as little as possible.

Now wash away the oil or cream in warm water and file off any snag edges with an emery board.

● Put wads of cotton-wool between the toes to facilitate lacquering and avoid smudging. Toenails varnished all over look prettier, last longer. Bring lacquer right up over the edge of the nail to protect stockings.

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WITH BARBECUE SAUCE

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Method. Combine potato, onion and parsley. Add beaten egg and vinegar. Mix in fish (drained and flaked). Season to taste and cool.
Shape into cakes on floured board and place on greased baking dish. Top each cake with Barbecue Sauce, and bake in a moderate oven, 15-20 minutes.

BARBECUE SAUCE
Combine ½ cup tomato sauce, 1 dessertspoon Worcestershire sauce, 1 dessertspoon vinegar, ½ teaspoon mixed mustard.

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Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

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point in such nonsense as dancing or looking at the lights or being social. Gabe's in the dining-room. We'd better go find him before Humphrey arrives and gets furious."

She took a final look at the lights below them. "The city is beautiful after the rain, isn't it?"

They moved from the clearness of the night air through the crowded drawing-room, filled with smoke and clinking glasses, brightly gowned women, men in evening clothes.

Finally they had made their way to the dining-room.

"Whew!" Brenna leaned against the doorway, patting her hair. "I feel as if I had been dragged through a keyhole. There's Gabe."

"Where? Oh, by the lobster."

"With remains of chocolate cake on his face."

"You do love the boy, don't you, Brenna?"

"As if he were my own."

Gabe smiled at them waveringly.

"Gabe!" said Brenna. "Is anything wrong?"

Gabe shook his head. "I guess maybe two lobsters were a mistake, after the shrimp."

Brenna reached up to feel his forehead. Gabe bent a little towards her. His knees doubled, and he collapsed forward, without sound.

Japhet thrust Brenna quickly aside, catching Gabe's arms to break his fall. His voice was sharp. "This is no stomach-ache! Call a doctor! Right away!" His fingers were busy, loosening Gabe's clothing, feeling for his pulse.

A doctor was found in the building and brought, apparently forcibly without explanation, directly from his bed.

The doctor shook his head. "He's a very sick boy. We've got to get him to a hospital at once."

Within minutes the ambulance attendants arrived.

"I'll come with you," said Japhet.

"No." Brenna's white face looked at him. "Max will come with me. Any of the others would. These are my friends. They'll take care of me, help me. You find Humphrey, Japhet. If he's left Pernaud's, he must be along the avenue somewhere on the way home. Find Humphrey, please."

"Don't worry," said Japhet. "I'll find him, wherever he is."

And she knew that he would.

For a second, Humphrey just stood there in the hall. He smelled the wetness where the rain had come in the open window by the fire escape. He heard the silence where there had been the soft patting of water on glass. He realised that the rain had stopped. He ground his knuckles into the wall beside him, hard and cold and undoubtedly real. And he did not believe any of these things, even his pain.

This was impossible. He had been so careful. That no one should see him come to Rachel's. To prove that he was elsewhere. To take every precaution against discovery. And now this brown-eyed girl, this Francys Maguire, stood near him, the living proof that he had been here.

When Rachel's body was found, and this girl came forward with her testimony—how the little ham would enjoy testifying!

She isn't in the witness chair yet, he thought grimly. She doesn't even know anything has happened. My plan is still perfect, except for her. I knew all along that unforeseen things would come up, things that must be dealt with.

He was thinking clearly now. He was proud that his momentary panic had passed. His voice was completely under control. He said severely, "What are you doing here?"

QUICKLY he noted he had succeeded in forcing her to a somewhat subdued look.

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Ward," she said breathlessly. "I didn't mean to follow you, truly, I didn't, truly. But I kept thinking, it's the last night of the play, it's the last night I'll see Humphrey Ward, the last night. And then I just purely happened to see you walking up Broadway ahead of me, and you just happened to take a cab, and somehow I just happened to take a cab, too. I didn't mean to follow you, but —I just wanted to see you again."

She cast him a quick, imploring glance.

"When you got out and walked, I didn't bother you. You know I didn't bother you. I just walked behind you. Way behind. I only wanted to see you. And then when you came in here, and I saw from the lobby indicator what floor the elevator went up to—I know I shouldn't have come up, but I thought if I could just hear his voice once more, just once. And then, when I saw you come out, I had to speak to you. I just had to!"

Again she gave him that quick, imploring glance. "If I could only make you realise what it means to me to really see Humphrey Ward in person; to put my hand on your arm."

They couldn't stand there all night, certainly, Humphrey thought. Her chatter would wake the whole floor. She was harmless enough, so far. She didn't know anything. Just another hero-worshipping, theatre-smitten kid. Rather touching, actually, the way she felt about him. If it weren't so deadly dangerous. For them both. Fortunately he still had the gun.

He took her arm firmly, steered her towards the elevator, pressed the button. They were in the elevator then, she smiling up at him from under that awful hat, bravely, breathlessly. She moved closer to him. He noticed with irritation that she used one of the cheaper standard-brand perfumes.

She actually thinks I'm interested in her, he thought furiously. Humphrey Ward.

He ignored her pointedly, concentrating on the problem which faced him. At this late hour, surely he could count on there being no one in the lobby. No one was. But as they went out the glass front door, a cab pulled up and a man and woman in evening clothes got out.

Humphrey turned his face towards the wall. The woman was holding the man's arm, laughing up at him. He was bending towards her amorously. Neither of them seemed to glance towards Humphrey and Francys Maguire.

But wouldn't they be bound to notice a girl in a hat trimmed with purple feathers? How could they not notice Humphrey Ward? Could he count on their being utterly absorbed with each other? Because if either of them remembered, even later . . . If it hadn't been for this infernal girl, Humphrey could have got out of the building as he had planned, when he was sure no one was coming.

But the man and woman hadn't looked at them. Humphrey knew they hadn't. The street outside was dark and deserted; robberies in this neighborhood were frequent, it being so rich and so close to the slums. Who was going to ask questions later about an unknown and unidentified girl? Certainly no one was going to ask Humphrey Ward!

"We'll take their cab!" said Francys brightly. "Yoo-hoo! Wait!"

Humphrey did not want a cab, of course, particularly from the door of Rachel's apartment house at an hour unusual enough to be remembered and summoned after the manner of calling a cow by a girl in a hat with purple feathers. But to refuse or protest would be to call more attention to himself than to silently acquiesce.

Better to deal with Francys Maguire elsewhere, anyhow. Two murders on the same night in the same district might be connected. Not two in separate parts of the city with nothing to link them.

Humphrey kept his face carefully in shadow. He muttered an address on the avenue several blocks below Pernaud's. In the cab beside Francys, he leaned back carefully, keeping his features hidden from the driver's view. It wouldn't matter if the cabby remembered picking up two people here at this hour.

In so large a building a lot of people were picked up during an evening. Nothing particularly to connect these two with Rachel. There were many other apartments, many people coming and going. It wouldn't even matter if the cabby remembered the girl's hat being trimmed with those awful feathers. She would not be found in a hat.

No harm so long as the cabby didn't remember Humphrey Ward. He couldn't remember him: he didn't see him. Not really. But Humphrey must keep this dreadful girl from mentioning his name or saying anything to identify him.

He put his arm around her shoulders, those thin, bony shoulders. Really, she was almost a skeleton. He said shortly, "Tell me about yourself."

"Me? You want to hear about me? Truly? Hum——"

"Where were you born?"

"In Ohio. A little bitty old town called Xenia. Isn't that a funny name None of my family were ever act——"

"What did your father do?"

She giggled. "It's awfully funny. He was a policeman."

What's funny about that? Why did she bring up a policeman? She can't know anything. Coincidence, that's all. Coincidence.

He asked harshly, "He's dead?"

"He and mum both." Francys sniffed. "I'm all alone."

"But you have friends"

"Not here. I came to York to——"

"I know," he said "We won't talk abo now. You must know here."

"Oh, yes. I know That is, I've only bee a short while, but I alw like to talk to people, an how——I know New think it's funny if you them. Strangers, I mean a hamburger tonight in shop, and I asked the the counter next to me wanted the sugar for his —just asked him if he the sugar, mind—and he at me as if—as if I were

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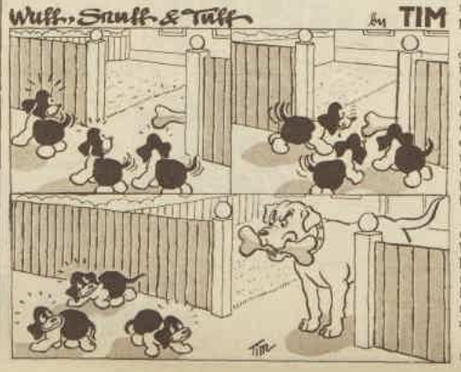
"He's trying to tell us something!"

FOR THE CHILDREN

Wuff, Snuff & Tuff by TIM



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hum up or something. brought up like that. that sort of girl, Mr.

interposed skilfully, he time to prevent the being spoken. "I under- that New York must be rely for a stranger."

n't feel like a stranger, It's funny. From the me I saw New York, I was my town. More tle tatty old Xenia ever dn't know why. There's ng about it and a feeling it's silly to say you love it's just buildings and nd glass, but I love New I don't want to leave it, I'm not going to. And me I'm going to have my e lights like——"

nly he fought down the h of her words about his indled in his heart. Fin- after an interminable time, eached the address he had which, unfortunately, e to be a closed jewellery

mphrey was again ready the exact fare plus a rea- e tip. He thrust the e at the cabby, who was t to devote his attention to ng it, while Humphrey nded rapidly from the cab, g only his raincoated As he had expected, the llowed him quickly. Prob- e cabby saw only her s, not her face.

—it's sort of dark, isn't Francys asked. "Maybe — I should just keep the d cab and run on home, ntured you long enough."

took her arm firmly. "I ear of it."

"But, Mr. Ward!" she breathed. "It is kind of late and—"

And not nearly dark enough here. The park will be the place. The park. But first I must stop at Pernaud's. Pernaud is my alibi for the time of Rachel's death: I was walking along Broadway and up the avenue, as I always do, stopping at Pernaud's as I always do, for my one drink. There's no choice. I can't let this girl out of my sight, and I can't be any later at Pernaud's. I'll have to take her there with me.

It was a horrible experience, walking into Pernaud's with a girl in shabby clothes and a terrible hat. For just one instant Humphrey caught the flicker of surprise on Pernaud's old face as he hurried forward, as usual, to greet Humphrey Ward. Afterward there was only the deepest courtesy, and in Pernaud's eyes the sympathy of one gentleman for another who finds himself in an embarrassing predicament.

Pernaud was a small sad-looking old Frenchman, with the large dark eyes of his race, a thin crabbed body, and the unmistakable air of a nobleman who has come upon hard times and finds himself cast alone into a hostile world.

Pernaud made his usual ceremony of taking them to the table he always kept for Humphrey. No one else, at any time, was ever allowed to sit there, except with Humphrey. Pernaud seated Francys with the

Continuing . . . . Cry Murder

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gallantry he would have shown a duchess.

"Late tonight, Pernaud," Humphrey said. "Closing night, you know."

Pernaud looked sadder than ever. He was thinking, doubtless, that it had been good for the late-hour business to have Humphrey come in after the performance, and to have it such a well-known fact that he did come in. But all he said was, "Monsieur Ward will now have a rest."

"I can use it," Humphrey said. "I had to spend a lot of time tonight shaking hands. I didn't leave the theatre until after twelve. What time is it now, anyhow?"

Pernaud snapped his fingers magnificently. A waiter was despatched for a watch. Actually this was a little more notice than Humphrey had wanted given to his query. But he enjoyed, as always, being a person of importance, the heady atmosphere of hero-worship. And here at Pernaud's he received not only the attention that was given to Humphrey Ward anywhere; not only the attention that was paid a good customer of a good cafe anywhere.

HERE, more than anywhere else, Humphrey felt he had disproved Rachel's taunt that the real Humphrey Ward was not a gentleman born. For his standing at Pernaud's, Humphrey was convinced, was that accorded a gentleman by another gentleman.

He himself had seen old Pernaud coolly aloof to some of the city blue bloods, to some of the theatre's brighter personalities. Pernaud was not impressed by superficials. The recognition he gave Humphrey was true homage to the person Humphrey was, as well as the greatness of his acting.

Pernaud made the usual pleasantries. He suggested perhaps the young lady would care for supper.

Francys' eyes brightened, but Humphrey said hastily, "We haven't time. Just two of the usual."

Pernaud withdrew discreetly. For once Humphrey was grateful for the dim-lit atmosphere of the place, which usually annoyed him a little, since candid photos sometimes snapped of him there had often proved, solely because of the lighting, quite unflattering. But tonight the shadowy blue walls, the indistinctness of the faces at the other tables, fitted his plans very well.

Pernaud's had once been a favorite place for supper after the opera; its walls were lined with framed programmes, with autographed photographs of the famous. The tables were small and widely spaced; the food delicious and highly priced.

"Drinks!" said Francys. "I'm hungry! I don't drink."

"Try this," Humphrey urged her, leaning forward to put his hand on hers, praying that Pernaud would not see the gesture. "This is part of life in New York, too, you know. Try just one."

Francys eyed the glass with open misgivings. He thought again what a mobile young face she had. A director's dream, actually. She lifted the glass to sip it gingerly.

"Ugh!" she said.

Watching her, Humphrey wished briefly that he did have time to order her a meal, a superb meal, to give her a last few good hours, of flattery, attention, gaiety, excitement. All the things she had longed for, and missed. It seemed little enough to do. But he could not do it. He felt no animosity towards her. Only pity, though pity was an emotion he had not felt in years, one in which he did not really believe.

People, Humphrey always said, made their own breaks, and there was no occasion to feel pity for them when they got the results of what they had made. But this girl was so young, so thin, so vulnerable. Through no fault of hers, except an innocent adulation, a rosy dream, she had stumbled on to knowledge so dangerous that it would cost her her pitiful unfulfilled life.

But it's Francys Maguire or Humphrey Ward, he thought. No real decision to make. If I killed Rachel, whom I once loved, to save my own life, literally as an artist, why am I wasting sympathy on this scrawny creature?

Francys was sipping her drink more regularly now. Her eyes seemed even wider than before. She giggled, a little, a raucous sound that did much towards restoring Humphrey's sense of proportion. The world was full of Francys Maguires, he told himself sternly. Millions of them. One more or less was a small matter. But Humphrey Ward——

He drew a deep breath, steady in his resolution now. He smiled at Francys, kindly, paternally. Get the necessary information from her. Stay here the necessary time. Then get on with the matter before it threw off the time schedule of his alibi.

He said, "Do you live with someone?"

She shook her head, staring stupidly into her drink.

"You live alone, then? At some sort of a girls' club, perhaps?"

She shook her head again.

"A room somewhere? Do you have to be back at any certain time? Will anybody be waiting up for you?"

She giggled suddenly. Finishing her drink, she leaned forward to sip from his, leaving a large lipstick smear on the edge of the glass.

"Nobody waits for me," she said. "I'm always on time. Always."

Humphrey concluded that if this incident had had to happen, it could not have happened more providentially. An unknown girl, a stranger in New York. No inquiries, no identifications, perhaps. Just another unsolved and unsolvable death among the city's millions. No hurry. Everything must be as usual.

He sat back, wincing at the lipstick on the glass in front of him, at the way the drinks went directly to the head of the girl. An empty stomach, probably. But must she giggle?

Francys rose, suddenly and unsteadily. "Going to be sick," she said.

This was almost unbelievably humiliating. To be in Pernaud's at all with this cheap creature in her purple-feathered hat, to run the risk of her later being identified as having been with him, was bad enough. But to have her create a scene like this —she was plainly intending to be sick right here. In Pernaud's!

Pernaud materialised, miraculously, at Francys' elbow. He was supporting her, with gallant encouragement, murmuring words, steering her towards a door from which a uniformed maid emerged, to take her. Francys barely made it inside, but she made it. Humphrey leaned back, sighing.

Pernaud appeared, quietly, to remove the offending glass and supply another drink, without question. Humphrey sipped it gratefully.

"One of those stage-struck girls wanting theatrical advice," he said to Pernaud. "It's always a problem to get rid of them. She insisted on walking over here with me from the theatre. I hate to snub them rudely, and so somethimes I——"

Pernaud nodded. "An empty stomach, no doubt. Monsieur was only trying to be kind."

He changed the subject tactfully. He accepted Humphrey's invitation to sit down. Over an aperitif, he reminisced quietly of the days when he had been young. There was a certain village in the south of France where one could see the whiteness of the Alps in the distance, where the sun had a soft warmth it had in no other place, where the sky was a shade of blue found only there.

Listening, Humphrey felt, under the great dignity of Pernaud, the loneliness of the little man, in a far-off city of so many millions, speaking a strange tongue, longing for a small village thousands of miles away. Knowing all the great and near-great of America, yet wanting only the simple people of his native hamlet.

Humphrey had, as an actor, the ability to put himself in the place of others, to feel as they felt, at the moment he chose to. He felt himself close to the tears that were behind Pernaud's dark eyes. He found himself longing for what was doubtless a smelly, badly plumbed, backward place of ignorant, stupid people, far from Humphrey's beloved New York.

He realised with a start that he had given the matter far too much of his time. He had been here too long. He removed himself deliberately from the role of Pernaud, casting it off exactly as he had cast off Ake Ohberg earlier this evening.

"Wonderful place. Wonderful place," he murmured. "I can understand how you feel . . . Heavens! That girl! I had forgotten her completely. You shouldn't be so interesting, Pernaud. I do have my obligations as a host. I'll have to get her home."

Pernaud smiled happily. "That has been taken care of."

Humphrey stared at him. "Taken—care—of?"

"The attendant had orders to send her home in a cab as soon as she was better. My expense. It was so good to be able to do something for monsieur, who is always so kind to everyone else. Something, however small, to save him further embarrassment."

To be continued

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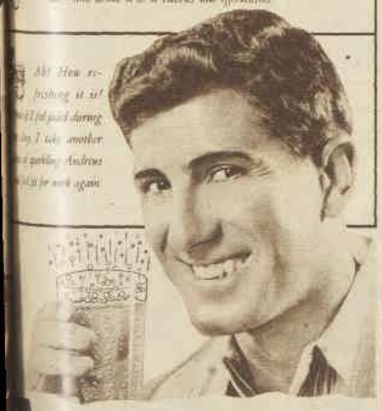

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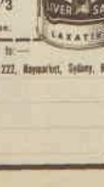

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THE VENUS DEATH

By Ben Benson

The Australian Women's Weekly
Novel April 14, 1954
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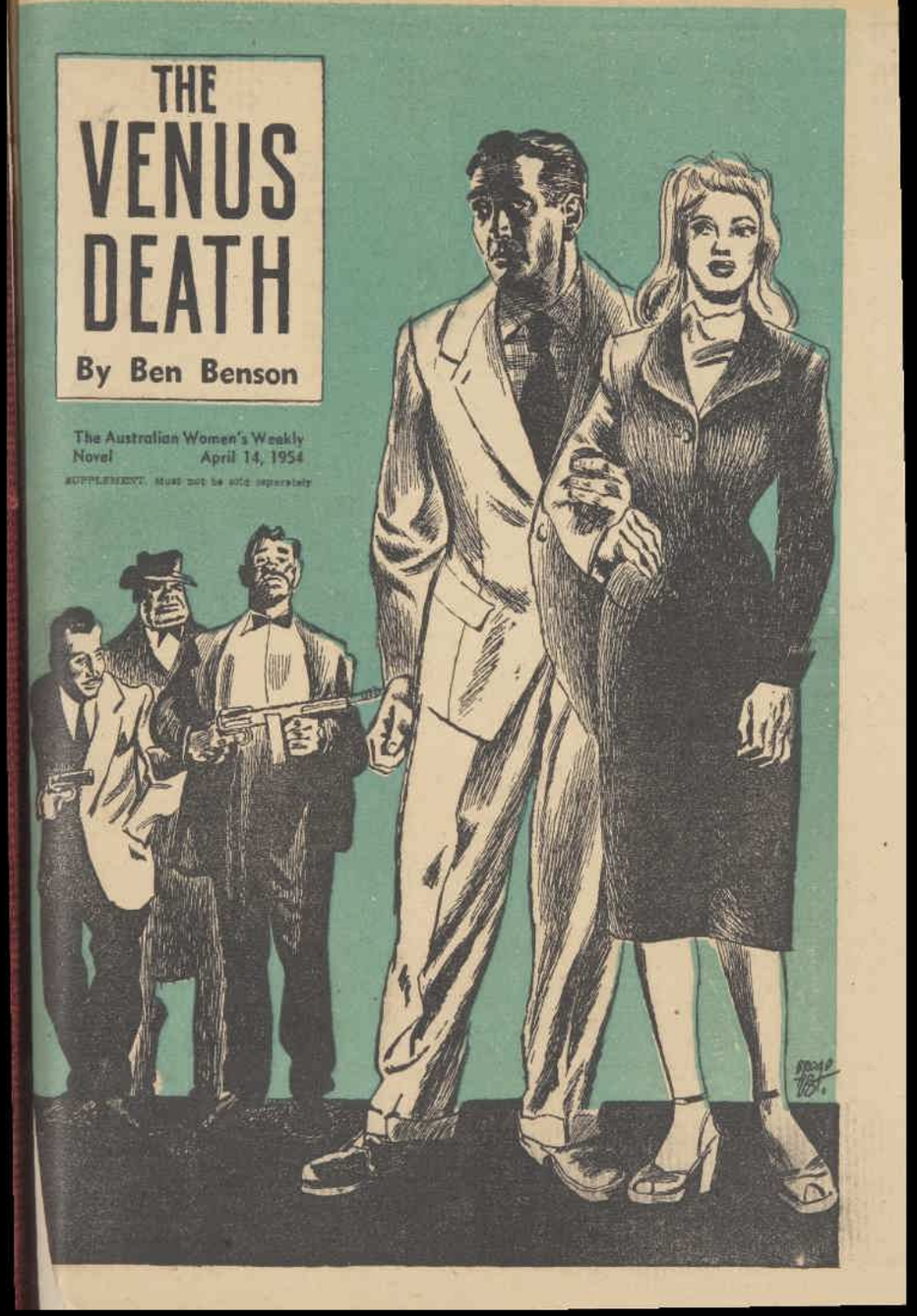

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Supplement to The Australian Women's Weekly — April 14, 1954

THE VENUS DEATH

I FIRST met her at a bar in Danford, Massachusetts. Usually, on my night off, I would drive directly home to Cambridge to see my mother and father. But this was one of those nights after a long, hard patrol. I was tired, and I thought just this one time I would go into nearby Danford, have a few beers, possibly take in a movie, and go back to the barracks and get some sleep.

The bar was on Berkshire Street, downtown in the city.

I was there early, just after six. The counter was empty and there were only two people in the booths. I sat on a leather-topped stool, my elbows on the bar, twisting the second glass of beer in my hands. The bartender was paying no attention to me. Suddenly he turned toward the door. I couldn't help but turn and look, too. A girl had come in.

She was about twenty-one years old and five feet five in her high-heeled black pumps. Her head was bare, her hair golden-yellow, soft and wavy, falling almost to her shoulders. Her skin was smooth and creamy, and her mouth was full and delicate and softly alluring. She had a well-curved, full-hipped body and perfect nylon-sheathed legs. She was wearing a tailored grey flannel suit. She carried a large black leather shoulder bag and black gloves. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen.

I didn't want to stare so I turned back to my beer. It was foolish for me to look at her, anyway. I had a girl back home in Cambridge named Ellen.

I heard her heels click-click by me and an aura of tantalising perfume wafted up. Through the mirror I saw her sit down two stools away. The bartender came and stood over her.

"I don't know," she said to him. "Perhaps an Old Fashioned."

Her voice was soft and throaty, with a little huskiness to it. I fidgeted with the button on my sports jacket, thinking she didn't belong in an obscure bar on Berkshire Street, but in a place more like the Onyx Room at the Hotel Danford Terrace. I lit a cigarette and I noticed my hand trembled a little. I knew I had no intention of picking her up, but she was beautiful, and her nearness sent my blood quickening. I kept looking at her and I saw her drink come. She took a bill from her bag and paid for it.

She picked up the short, stubby glass. She sipped at it. Then she fished in her bag. Her head turned towards me apologetically. She said, "I'm afraid I forgot to bring my cigarettes. Would you mind terribly?"

"No," I said. "Not at all." My hands were all thumbs as I took out the pack. I reached over and handed her one. Then I lit it for her. She took one puff, without inhaling. Then she put the cigarette down.

Suddenly she moved off her stool and sat down on the one next to me. "I hate to drink alone," she said.

"Everybody does," I said.

"I can say hello now. My name is Manette Venus."

"I'm Ralph Lindsey," I said. "Manette is a pretty name."

"Thanks. Do you come here often?"

"It's my first time."

"Mine, too," she said. The cigarette burned in the ash tray and her drink remained untouched. "When a girl gets lonely, she doesn't quite know what to do sometimes."

"You get lonely?"

Her thin eyebrows arched up. "Why not?"

"But anybody who looks like you—"

"You're sweet," she said. "But I am lonely and I've been lonely for a month—ever since I came to Danford. It's not a very cheery city."

"You can't expect too much in a mill town."

"You live in Danford?"

"Not exactly. About five miles outside. On the Main Road."

"Do you work in one of the mills?"

"No. I'm a cop," I said. "A state trooper."

"Oh, how nice," she said. "And how long have you been a trooper?"

"Three months. I'm what they call a 'boot.' Another name for recruit or rookie."

"Your face is sunburnt and your nose is peeling. But you're very good-looking."

"Thanks," I said. "It's the outdoor life."

"That makes you good-looking?"

"No. I was talking about the sunburn."

Then she laughed and I grinned back at her. She said, "I wonder if they serve food here."

"I wouldn't try it," I said. "But if you're hungry—"

"Oh, not really. I would like a lobster salad roll, though."

"You like lobster?"

"Love it. I come from Cleveland. Lobster is expensive there."

"We could go to Howard Johnson's. They have good lobster rolls."

She slid off her stool and picked up her bag and gloves.

"You haven't touched your drink," I reminded her.

"I don't care for it," she said hurriedly.

We went to the door. My car was outside. It was a 1946 Ford coupe. The fenders were battered but it had a good motor. We got in and I drove to the nearest Howard Johnson's.

It was as simple as that.

I SAT across from her in the booth, looking at her face in the glow of the table lamp. Her face was finely shaped, delicately boned, but inexpressive and immobile. Her eyes were heavily lidded and long-lashed, and their color was like the deep blue of the Gulf Stream.

I don't know what she was thinking. But I knew what I was thinking, and I had a twinge of conscience about it. It was of Ellen back home in Cambridge, to whom I was engaged. Also, I was thinking of fate, and how it was just plain luck the way I had met Manette Venus. And unconsciously I must have said it out loud.

"What was that?" she asked.

"Pure luck," I said. "The way we met, I mean. My father always said life is ninety per cent luck, but people don't recognise it. Only the smart ones do, and they take advantage of it."

"Is your father one of the smart ones?"

"No," I said. "Not that smart." I didn't tell her my father had no luck at all. He had been a state trooper who, in 1939, had been shot in the back and had been paralysed from the waist down ever since. "Are you one of the smart ones?"

She laughed. "Me neither. You see, I work in the mill."

"You? Which one?"

"Staley Woollen. Out in Staleyville. I'm in the office. Clerical work."

"It's a big mill. I go by there in a cruiser every Friday. It's on one of my patrols."

"I've never seen you."

"I go by before noon. I guess everybody's inside then."

"Are you alone in the car?"

"Yes."

"I've never noticed you," she said. "Lots of times I look out the window."

"I'll slow down the next time," I said. Then I told her how she couldn't miss the cruiser. It was pale blue. The state seals were on the doors and there were big white letters on the rear deck that said Massachusetts State Police. And on top of the roof there was a red light and a siren.

"I'll surely watch for it Friday," she said. "I'll wave to you from the window." Then she smiled. "But Friday's a long way off, and the evening is still young."

"We could take in a movie. There's a drive-in about a mile down the road."

"I'd love to see a movie," she said.

We left Howard Johnson's. It had grown dark. I was crossing the parking lot with her when suddenly she said, "Do you always carry a gun, Ralph?"

"What difference would that make?" I asked.

"I'm just curious," she said with a short, nervous laugh. "It isn't a secret or anything, is it?"

"No. Cops have to carry a gun at all times. I've got a little .38 Smith and Wesson Special here on my belt."

"Where?"

"At my right hip pocket." I opened my jacket and showed her the tiny leather open holster and the butt of the S&W.

She said, "No one would ever know."

We went to the drive-in theatre. Now I like the movies. But if you asked me, I couldn't even tell you what the picture was that October night. I was looking at her as she sat beside me.

She was a strange girl. Before there had been a forced brashness in her; now she seemed shy and timid. She didn't seem to be too relaxed either.

The picture ended and the lights went up as I started the car. I said, "How about a drink somewhere?"

"I'm not much for drinking, Ralph. Thanks, but I think it's time to go home."

"Where do you live?"

"I live on Glen Road. I have a room with a private family. You go down the road, past the Blue Grotto, to the first set of lights. Turn left."

"You don't live with your folks?"

"No. I'm all alone in Danford."

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I came to the lights and turned off. I drove along until I saw the sign Glen Road. On either side were curving streets with new houses. The houses began to thin out.

"It's a little way ahead," she said.

There was a wooded area for half a mile with no houses at all. Then a light gleamed through the trees.

"There," she said.

I pulled over and stopped in front of it. The house stood alone. Two stories and a high gabled attic. The house was old Victorian, with rotting shingles and a tangled unkempt high hedge.

"You're a long way from the bus," I said.

"Oh, no. The bus goes right by here to Staleyville." She turned to me nervously.

"Well," she said. "I really have to go in."

"I hope to see you again some time."

She moved over closer to me. "Don't you like me?" she asked suddenly.

"Why, sure. I like you," I said, startled "I—"

She put her arms around my neck. I could feel the soft resiliency of her body, the cool, scented cheek and a tendril of blond hair.

"This is what I meant," she whispered. Her lips came to mine, hot and moist, clinging. She broke away, picked up her bag and pushed on the door handle.

"Wait a minute," I said, catching my breath. But she was out of the car. I slid across the seat and came out on the road beside her. "I want to see you again, Manette."

"That's better," she said. "When?"

"Sunday," I said. "My first Sunday off since I was assigned to the troop."

"In the afternoon," she said.

"We'll have dinner together," I said.

I went up the crumbling flagstone walk with her. The house windows were dark. She took a key from her bag and put it in the door lock.

"Until Sunday then," she said. "Good night, Ralph."

"Good night, Manette," I said.

She opened the door and stepped inside. The door closed. I stood there for a moment. Then I went back down the walk and got into my car. I looked at the house. A light had gone on upstairs. I saw her come to the window and draw the shade. I started up the car and drove back.

I drove steadily, not fast. She had left a perfumed scent in the car. I was staring at the road, but I was thinking of the strangeness of her actions. She was like no other girl I had ever known. She had told me nothing of herself. And the more I thought of it, the pickup at the bar didn't seem like plain luck. It was almost as if she had expected me. And while I was trying to figure things out I came to the blue neon sign that said State Police.

I went into the office. The duty sergeant was Stan Maleski.

"What are you doing in?" Maleski asked. "Didn't you go home?"

"No," I said, signing in. "I went to Danford."

Maleski stood up and went to the bulletin board. He put up a notice on the clip stand. I went over and looked at the bulletin board. "Quiet tonight?" I asked.

"Pretty quiet," he said. "There's coffee in the kitchen if you want it, Ralph."

"I'm restless enough as it is," I said.

He looked at me with puzzled eyes. Then the telephone on his desk rang. He went over and picked it up.

"State Police," he said. "Troop E headquarters. Sergeant Maleski. Yes, sir."

I left him and went upstairs to my room. The bed near the window was mine. In the other bed, next to the locked closet, was the huddled, blanketed form of Patrolman Philip Kerrigan. I went over and shook him. "Wake up," I said.

He groaned, twisted under the blanket. Then his head poked out. "What time is it?"

"Eleven o'clock," I said.

"Look," he said. "I just got in from a patrol and I've got another one at six a.m." He buried his head again.

I shook him once more. "I met a girl tonight, Phil."

"I thought you had a girl named Ellen," he mumbled.

"This is a little different," I said.

"I know. The other one is sixty miles away."

"A beautiful blonde," I said. "The most beautiful girl I ever met in my life. Her name is Manette Venus."

"Hurray for you," he grunted.

"I'm going to see her again Sunday."

One eye opened. "You tell her you're a trooper?"

"Sure."

"And she wants to see you again?"

"Sure."

"The girl's crazy," he said.

"Listen," I said. "There's something funny about it. She acted a little strange—" But his breathing had become deep and steady. I undressed, locked my gun in the closet, and put out the light. I got into the hard narrow bed and lay there looking out across the dark fields. I could see the shortwave radio tower and the blinking red lights on top of it. I kept looking at them until I fell asleep.

MANETTE phoned me at the barracks the next evening, Thursday, just after I had come in.

She asked if I wanted to see her that evening. I told her I would have liked nothing better, but I was on duty. I did say I would ride by Staley Woollen the next morning before noon.

And I did, too. At 11.45 Friday morning I came off Route 138, moved down the valley and into Staleyville. I was driving cruiser 56, a new one, nicely polished and shiny, with a long buggy-whip antenna in the rear. I went past the old white church in the centre of Staleyville, over the stone bridge and the mill dam, and on to the two-lane road that led to the factory. Ahead of me I could see the tall smokestacks with their drifting grey plumes, and the moss-covered, ancient, red-brick buildings of the Staley Woollen Company.

I came up slowly. An armored truck emerged from the gate and turned on to the road. As it passed me, the driver blew his horn twice and waved. I waved back. It meant the weekly payroll at Staley had been delivered without incident.

As I came to the gate, the guard walked out of his glassed-in booth. He grinned at me and shouted something and I waved to him. I looked up at the office building, a two-story structure directly inside the gate. The sun was high in the sky and the windows were shadowed. I didn't see her.

I went on ahead, turned on to Route 116 and finished my morning patrol. I kept thinking it was a long time until Sunday.

But I saw her before Sunday. On Saturday morning I had a routine traffic patrol. I moved out of the driveway of Troop E Headquarters and stopped at the turnpike to let the cars go by. I turned the cruiser out on to the road. Ahead of me a small grey convertible was parked on the shoulder of the road. Somebody inside it blew the horn three times. I passed it, stopped the cruiser, and walked back. I had already seen who was inside the car. It was Manette Venus and she was alone.

"Hi." I grinned at her. "I didn't know you had a car."

"It's not mine," she said. "I borrowed it from a friend."

"And I thought you had no friends in Danford."

"It belongs to a girl in my office: I don't work today and she let me borrow it for a few hours." Her eyes swept over me. "I've never seen you in uniform. You're positively striking. But isn't that an awfully big gun to be carrying? It's not the same as the other night."

"No, this is the regulation, long-barrelled service revolver."

"And what's in that little black leather case on your belt?"

"My handcuffs."

"And that long leather pouch on your belt?"

"The ammunition carrier. It holds twenty-four rounds."

"All that? And do you carry a machine gun or a rifle in the car?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you keep in the trunk of the car?"

"A spare tyre."

She made a face at me. "Everybody carries a spare tyre. What else."

I smiled at her. "Why so curious?"

"Does it bother you, Ralph?"

"Yes. It bothers me a little."

She studied my uniform again.

"By the way," I said. "I drove by the factory yesterday. I didn't see you."

"I was making an entry with Mr. Reece, the office manager. I just couldn't get away. Which way did you come?"

"Through Staleyville, driving south."

"Do you always come that way?"

"Not always, no."

She looked at a tiny wrist watch. "I mustn't keep you, Ralph. See you tomorrow?"

"I'll be parked on your doorstep."

She smiled softly, put the grey convertible in gear, and said goodbye. She drove off. I watched the car as it disappeared around the bend. I wanted to see her again, to be near her, yet there was a vague uneasy feeling in me. She had asked too many, not-so-innocent questions.

I dressed carefully Sunday. I put on my brown whipcord slacks, brown suede shoes, a green woollen sport shirt and my hound's-tooth sports jacket.

Manette was waiting for me in the living-room of the old house on Glen Road. She introduced me to Mr. and Mrs. Fulton Reece, the people she lived with, and she told me Mr. Reece was her office manager at Staley Woollen. Mrs. Reece was quiet, prim and white-haired with a small, dry-lipped mouth. Mr. Reece was pasty and flabby-faced, quiet and untidy.

We chitchatted for a moment in the living-room. I stood there stiffly and uncomfortably while Mr. and Mrs. Reece sat on the damask-covered divan. The inside of the house surprised me. It had a gracious dignity. There was no department store furniture, either. Instead, the tables were hand-carved, burnished antiques.

Manette picked up a large wicker picnic basket. I took it from her. We said goodbye to the Reeces, and went out into the warm bright sunlight.

"What's in the basket?" I asked.

"Picnic, silly." Manette laughed. "It's such a nice day for one."

"Good stuff," I said. "But you shouldn't have gone to all the trouble."

"This party's on me. I wanted to show I wasn't a gold digger." She

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stopped beside the car. "What did you think of the Reeces?"

"I liked Mrs. Reece," I said. "I don't know if I like your boss."

"They're an old Danford family," Manette said, stepping into the car. "Mrs. Reece is a sick woman." Then she looked at me closely. "Why didn't you like Mr. Reece?"

"I don't know. Something about his eyes. They weren't normal. Why did you ask? Am I rattling family skeletons?"

Her face flushed suddenly. "They're an old Danford family," she said again. "You should have respect for them."

"Sure," I said. "Sure, I will."

"When Mrs. Reece found out I was alone in Danford, she was kind enough to give me a room here."

We drove on to the turnpike. She asked me take Route 105.

"Where are we going?" I asked her.

"Deer Pond," she said. "Do you know where it is?"

"Yes," I smiled. "But how did you know of it, stranger?"

"A man who works in my office has a cottage on Deer Pond. His name is Cole Boothbay. The office had a picnic there a few weeks ago. It's a lovely spot."

I drove on. There was a narrow, rutted dirt lane. I turned on to it, the car bumping over the potholes, a haze of dust rising behind us. We continued up the road until the crest of a hill and another dirt road to the left, and then we came to a clearing carpeted with brown pine needles. Beyond the trees was the glimmering blue water of Deer Pond.

"The yellow cottage," she said. "I borrowed a key in case we want to use the stove."

I drove the car across the clearing, pulled up and parked. The cottage had yellow shingles and green window shades. The shades were drawn. I took the picnic basket and followed her up the three short steps which led to the screened porch.

She unlocked the front door and pushed it back. Inside it was dark, dank and musty. She opened windows and the pine-scented breeze wafted in. "We won't stay in here," she said quickly. "We can bring the lounge chairs down to the edge of the lake."

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The water lapped gently along the soft sandy shore. I pushed the empty picnic basket aside and settled into the low-slung chair. She looked at the empty basket.

"Don't they feed you at the barracks?" she asked.

"The food was very good. And I was hungry." I leaned back in the chair, looked up through the pines and saw the deep blue sky and the white cotton balls of clouds. "This is the life," I said. "This is really living."

She laughed and dropped down in the pine needles beside my chair, her black slacks taut over her rounded hips. Her hands reached out and drew my head towards hers. She kissed me.

"Tell me about yourself," she said.

So I told her. I told her I was born and brought up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, not far from Harvard. That I graduated from Cambridge High and spent a year at Boston University, studying chemistry. And how I went into the Army and spent a year in Korea with the Second Division. And how I came home, took the examinations for the State Police, and went to the Training School for three months. And, finally, how I was assigned to Troop E.

"And you're going to make it your career?" she asked.

"I once wanted to be a chemist," I said. "Sometimes you never do the things you start out to do."

"Why not?" she asked. "What stopped you?"

"It's a long story," I said. "I'll tell you some time." I turned on my side and faced her. I noticed for the first time the small white scar behind her ear. "Where did you get the scar?"

"When I was a child," she said. "Mastoid. That's why I wear my hair so long."

"It hardly shows," I said. "I'll bet you were the prettiest child in Cleveland."

She looked at me blankly. "Cleveland?"

"Isn't that where you're from?"

"Well—around there," she said, looking away.

"Where are your folks?"

"They're dead. They died when I was very young."

"What made you decide to come to Danford?"

"Staley Woollen was advertising for clerical help. I'd never been to New England before."

"But you have no friends here. None at all?"

"It takes me a long time to choose friends." Then she smiled at me. "You're the exception to the rule, Ralph."

I reached out and tried to draw her in to me. Her back arched. "Wait, darling," she said. "I have to know something first." Then the words rushed out, tumbling over one another. "Do you believe a girl could meet a boy and in a few days be so in love with him that she'd marry him in a minute? I mean if the boy would have her?"

"Meaning you?" I asked slowly.

"Meaning us," she said tremulously.

"I don't know," I said. "It's been so quick. Sure, I believe those things happen, but—" I stopped. I wasn't sure what more to say.

QUICKLY she turned away from me, her face flushed. She stood up and began brushing the pine needles from her slacks. "I think we'd better go," she said distantly. She bent down and opened her big leather handbag. She took out a metal lipstick tube.

I stood up. "Wait," I said. "I'm sorry. Maybe I was a little abrupt, but you took me by such surprise—" My voice caught in my throat. I had been looking at the handbag and I had seen something gleam inside. "Hold it open," I said.

"What?" she asked. She quickly snapped the bag shut. I took it from her and opened it.

I brought out a pearl-handled 32-20 Colt revolver with an ice-blue two-inch barrel. I stared at her.

"It's mine," she said, her face contorted. "There was a pair of them once. I only have this one now."

I broke it open. There were six cartridges in the cylinder. I said, "It's loaded full. You mean you carry this around with you all the time?"

"It's mine." Her lower lip began to quiver. "I own it."

"But what reason could you have for carrying a concealed weapon?" I asked. "What are you afraid of, Manette?"

"Because I've been involved in things," she said in a tight, strangled voice.

"What things are you talking about?" I asked harshly.

"Not nice things," she said tonelessly. "Nothing we can talk about."

"We have to talk about it. You're carrying a loaded gun. You don't have a licence for it, do you?"

Her laugh was hard, brittle and despairing. "And it's against the law and you're a cop. Where do we go now? To the barracks?"

"Don't be silly," I said. I put the gun back in her bag and handed it to her. "Take it home and bury it in a bottom drawer. Promise?"

"Yes, I promise."

"Now, be a good kid and tell me what the trouble is."

She shook her head. "There's no more trouble," she said in a strained voice. "Nothing is going to happen."

"No, you're in a jam."

"Not now. It's over. I'm going to forget you, Ralph. You can go back to the nice little girl next door. She's for you. Not me."

"How did you know there was a girl next door?"

"Because every boy has a girl next door, or in the next block or somewhere in his neighborhood. I'm giving you your chance to get out. Take it. You don't know how lucky you are. Go back to your girl." Her eyes were brimming. "What's her name?"

"Her name is Ellen," I said. "Look, maybe I don't want to be rushed into things, and I can change my mind about going back, too."

"No, it wouldn't work with us," she said dully. "I thought there was a chance, but there isn't. I shouldn't have bothered to try. Now take me home, please."

So I drove her home. She sat silently beside me, her shoulders slumped, her face pale and drawn. When we turned into Glen Road it had grown dark. I walked with her by the lantern post to the front door. She turned to me.

"Just one thing more," she said softly. "Would you kiss me goodbye, please?"

I put the basket down and drew her in close. Her face came up and I saw her eyes were wet with tears. Then suddenly there was a sharp intake of breath and her body tensed and her hand gripped my arms. Behind me I heard a car start up. I turned around. It was a black sedan. It flashed by us, went swiftly up Glen Road.

"Who was that?" I asked her.

She shook her head dumbly.

"Somebody you know," I said. "Somebody you're afraid of. That's why you asked if I carried a gun. That's why you carry a gun."

"No, no," she said. "It's nothing. The noise of the car starting scared me. Probably one of the neighbors."

"Out here in the woods you don't have neighbors. It was somebody sitting in a parked car. What's happening, Manette?"

"I don't know," she said hysterically. "I don't know." Then she wrenched away from me, opened the door and ran inside. The door slammed.

I pressed the bell button. I waited. She didn't open the door. I rang again, picked up the wicker basket. "Tell me," I shouted through the door. I rattled the knob. I waited five minutes. I watched for the light in her room. It didn't go on.

I put the basket down near the door. I went back to my car, got in and drove slowly back to the barracks.

. . . . . .

I was getting ready for breakfast Monday morning when Sergeant Ray Beaupre poked his head into my room. "Ralph," he said, "the skipper wants to see you."

Phil Kerrigan was knotting his tie in front of the mirror. He turned around to me. "What have you done wrong now, kid?"

"I don't know," I said. I had always been a little afraid of the troop commander. He was a stickler on up

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forms, for one thing. I made sure mine was meticulous and correct.

"How do I look?" I asked Kerrigan.

"Gorgeous," Kerrigan said sardonically.

I went downstairs to the troop commander's office. Captain Fred Walsh was sitting behind his desk. He looked up and saw me standing there. His heavy eyebrows knitted together for a moment.

"Where were you yesterday, Ralph?" he asked.

"At Deer Pond, sir. I was out with a girl."

"Weren't you supposed to go home and see your folks?"

"I guess I was."

"If you couldn't make it, why didn't you phone them?"

"I'm sorry, sir. I should have."

"And last Wednesday, on your night pass, you didn't go home, either."

"Well, I met this girl, sir—"

"Your father phoned me," Walsh snapped. "I don't want your old man calling me and asking if I've got you on punishment duty so you can't come home. And if you're running around with some cookie I'm not going to lie to your old man, either. I've always had a heap of respect for him. He was a good, seasoned trooper. Not like what we have now — a bunch of young kids still wet behind the ears."

He looked up at me with his hard, wise, cynical eyes. He was all cop and nothing else. "Well?" he asked me. "When are you going to call your old man?"

"I'll call him now, sir."

"Go ahead. And you'll switch nights off with Kerrigan this week. That means you're off Wednesday night again. You go straight home and see your father. Lord knows he's got little enough now in life. It's the least you owe him."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Sometimes I wonder if you realise what it means for a man to be locked in a wheel chair."

"I realise it. I live with him, sir."

He bent down to his papers. "All right, Ralph," he said wearily.

I washed my cruiser down. Then I went on patrol, fretful and irritable. I was going to phone Manette as soon as I returned and finished my reports. But while I was at supper she phoned me instead.

"I tried to forget you," she said. There was a quivery catch in her voice. "I swear I did. Don't you think I lay awake all night, seeing that red, sunburnt face of yours?"

"I didn't sleep well, either," I said.

"Come and see me tonight," she said.

"I want to but I can't. I'm going on night patrol with Phil Kerrigan."

"When will I see you?"

"I'm off Wednesday night, but I have to go into Cambridge. I have a sick father, Manette."

"When, Ralph?"

"Next week. Monday. I don't get a day off until then. Why can't you tell me over the phone—?"

"If we had the chance," she interrupted, "if you were willing. Would you take me away from here? Away from this evil city and its evil people—all its filth and badness?"

"Where?" I asked. "Cities are people, not names. You'll find the people the same all over."

"I want you to take me away," she said. "Anywhere. To New York, where people can submerge themselves."

"I can't leave the troop," I said. "This is my life now."

"But you could become a city policeman somewhere."

"But I'm a trooper," I said. "It's a lot different from being a city cop."

I heard the breath go out of her. "Forget it," she said. Her voice sounded tired and defeated. "It was a crazy, frantic idea, anyhow. I kept saying to myself, I shouldn't call you."

"You don't have to run away," I said. "There's no trouble that can't be straightened out. We can talk about it when I see you next week."

"I think it will be too late then," she said. "Goodbye, Ralph."

"No, wait," I said. "I'll see you when I come back Thursday. I'll try to get away for an hour—"

"Too late, darling," she said softly. She hung up. I stood there with the receiver in my hand. Phil Kerrigan came into the guardroom.

"Come on," he said. "It's a long night patrol."

I put the receiver on the hook. "I don't understand her."

"Girl trouble, huh?" Kerrigan said cheerfully. "Mostly, it's the hours that spoil it for you."

"No, it's more than that," I said. "And I wish I knew."

My night pass started Wednesday, at 5 p.m. I should have left for Cambridge immediately. But at 5.20 I was standing beside my car across from the old house on Glen Road, waiting for Manette Venus.

The Staleville bus came down over the hill and stopped in front of the house. Manette Venus stepped out. She was wearing a blue suit, a white blouse, blue shoes and a large blue shoulder bag.

She saw me standing beside my car and ran across the road.

"What's wrong, Ralph?" she asked, breathing rapidly.

"I was worried about you."

"Oh," she said, looking down at the ground. "Why?"

"Stop it," I said tersely. "Something's wrong. You're in trouble. You can't raise things to a high pitch, then cut them off. You can't leave everything undone, unspoken." Suddenly I reached out and took the shoulder bag.

"The gun isn't there," she said with a wry smile. "I did exactly what you told me. I put it away."

I gave the bag back to her. "I can't go away and leave things unfinished," I said. "If I've done something wrong, if I'm to blame somehow—"

"You made me fall in love with you," she said quietly. "You didn't tell me you had a girl named Ellen. Are you engaged to her?"

"Yes," I said.

"Wasn't it wrong, going out with me?" she asked softly. "And making love to me?"

"Yes, it was wrong, and I knew it was wrong, and I made a mistake. But then, you haven't been very frank with me, either."

"So that makes us even," she said bitterly. "It was you who carried things just so far and backed down. What is it, Ralph? Is your conscience starting to bother you?"

"Maybe," I said. "Since I met you I'm all mixed up inside, and that's the truth. It isn't only Ellen. I have an obligation to my family, too. That's where it really starts."

"Now you're bringing your family into it. Why don't you admit your refusal starts with me and nobody else?"

"No, it starts further back," I said. "It starts in 1939 when a man was shot in the back."

"You're talking riddles," she said. "I hate riddles."

"It's no riddle," I said. "I'm talking about my father. I'm talking about 1939 when he was a State Police corporal because that's when it begins, that winter when he went out on a call to the town of Lincolnshire. A drunken laborer had been beating his wife and the local, part-time chief of police couldn't handle him alone. My father came there with another trooper to bring the man in. My father took the front of the house. The other trooper went to the back to cut off the rear.

"My father got into the house and the man did what was least expected. He grabbed a rifle and shot my father in the back.

"The other trooper—his name was Ed Newpole — broke in through the rear door, his revolver in his hand. The laborer turned with his rifle. Newpole shot him and killed him instantly. But my father's spine was broken and he became completely paralysed from the waist down."

"I'm sorry," Manette murmured. "I'm terribly sorry."

"Everybody was sorry," I said. "Later, and through the years, the men would come to visit us in Cambridge. Sometimes they'd take my father out to Troop A Headquarters in Framingham, where he'd spend the day.

"Sometimes he'd bring me with him. He'd point to me and say, 'Watch this kid of mine. Wait until he grows up. Then you'll see a real trooper.'"

Her eyes were thoughtful as I finished. "So there it is," I said. "I grew up and went into the troops. What else could I do? You think I could quit and go away, and leave him with nothing?"

"No," she said tonelessly. "And I understand now."

"I wish I could understand you," I said. "You've held back, told me nothing. The more you hold back the worse it will get. Bring it out into the open. Now, Manette."

"You make it sound so glib and easy," she said. "But there are so many things tangled up in this. Maybe my own life doesn't matter. But there's danger to you own career and your own life."

"Danger to my life?" I asked. I took her by the shoulders. "What danger? I've been in Danford only three months. I know hardly anybody."

"But people know you," she said listlessly. "They can get to you."

"Now you're the one who's talking riddles," I said angrily. "How can they get to me? And why? And how are you involved in it?"

"They're bad people," she said. "I can betray them to you and you can arrest them and lock them up. But I'd have to betray myself, too. And then I'd never see you again."

"But if you turn state's evidence and there are extenuating circumstances—"

"Oh, I'll do it," she said. "I've made up my mind to it. I can't run forever. But first I have to prepare myself. And nobody else can do it for me." Her eyes looked up to mine. "You're going home tonight, Ralph?"

"Yes," I said.

"When you come back," she said, in a subdued, tired tone, "phone me. I'll be ready with the story then. It won't be a pleasant one, Ralph."

I wanted to argue, but there was a stubborn finality in her voice. "Sure," I said. "As long as you promise."

"I promise. I'll tell you everything tomorrow."

And I knew she would. So I left her then. I got into my car and drove away. It was the last time I saw her alive.

* * * * * *

When I arrived in Cambridge it was eight o'clock at night. Our house was an old white bungalow with a little white picket fence around it. I came up the walk to the front porch, opened

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the front door, and caught the savory fragrance of roast beef.

Mother called "Ralph?"

She came into the living-room. I bent over and kissed her.

"You're almost an hour late," she said. "You haven't been home for ten days. I know it's a long trip. But it means so much to your father."

"How is he?"

"The same. He was in his room resting last I knew. He should be up by now."

"I'll go in and help him."

"No. You know how he hates to have you help him into the wheel-chair." She stood back and measured me. "You look all famished and tuckered out. Have you lost weight."

"No. But I'm like a bird dog when I sniff that roast beef. Is it ready?"

"It's been ready for an hour," she said. "Here's your father coming."

He came into the living-room in his chrome wheel-chair, the one I had bought him with my first two weeks' trooper pay. He was emaciated and gaunt, and his face had a pallor, and his hair seemed greyer than ever before. There was my mother's hand-knitted coverlet over his wasted legs.

"Let's look at this boot trooper," he said with mock sternness. "Push those shoulders back. There, that's better. Ralph, why didn't you come home your last two days off?"

"I got tied up with a few things, Pa."

"It's a long trip, Walter," my mother said to him, quick to defend me. "It's over sixty miles, and after a boy comes off patrol he's tired. I should think you'd speak to Fred Walsh and have Ralph transferred. He could go to Framingham, or Andover, or Concord. Then he'd be much nearer home."

"No, you know that's foolish, Millie," my father said. "They have reasons for stationing a trooper away from his home. It's better he doesn't know any people in his assigned area." Then he turned to me. "How's Fred Walsh?"

"Fine," I said briefly.

"You don't like him, do you?"

"He's tough," I said. "I'll get used to him."

"Fred Walsh has to retire next spring," my father said. "When a man gives his life to an organisation——"

"But the younger ones coming up," I said; "they have to have a chance, too."

"The young ones!" my father said. "Always impatient, restless. But what will a man do when he reaches Walsh's age? He'll be only fifty. Is his life over?" He shook his head sadly. "When I think of it, there ain't many left of the old gang now. Outside of the Commissioner, Major Carradine, Fred Walsh and Bob Clyde in Ballistics, I guess there's nobody left from my time."

"There's Ed Newpole," my mother said.

"Well, I was talking about the uniformed branch. Ed left the troops and went into the detective branch."

My mother interrupted. "You go wash up and let Ralph wash up, too."

"Yes, ma'am," my father said, saluting her. Then he wheeled happily out of the living-room.

I came into the living-room with a bath towel in my hand. I picked up the newspaper. I looked across into the dining-room and I noticed the gold-embroidered linen tablecloth on the dining-room table.

I came into the dining-room. "You expecting company?" I asked.

"Didn't your father tell you over the phone? Ellen Levesque is coming to dinner."

"He didn't tell me," I said. "Look, we've known Ellen since she was this high. She's been here to dinner before. You don't have to put out the family heirlooms to impress a kid like Ellen."

"She's not a kid. She's twenty-one."

"Twenty," I corrected. "I'm three years older than she."

"Your father was five years older than I."

"Now, what is this? Who's talking marriage, Ma?"

"You have," she said calmly. "Often. And with Ellen."

"We never mentioned anything definite."

"Aren't you in love with Ellen?"

"Sure. Ellen and I——". Then I stopped and I could feel the redness creeping over my face. I was thinking of Manette Venus.

"What?" my mother asked.

"I ought to have time," I said hurriedly. "I'm still in my probationary period. I don't think this is the time to talk about it."

She sighed. "Well, never mind it now. Dinner was ready an hour ago, and Ellen was waiting for you. She went home for a moment. I do want this to be nice. I've entertained very little since your father's accident. When he was well he liked the little extra touches."

I WAS putting on a fresh shirt in my bedroom when I heard the front door open. Then I heard my father's dry, rasping cough and Ellen's quick, bubbling laughter.

I came into the living-room and Ellen whirled around suddenly. She was a china doll of a girl, slim and as supple as a reed, with black, wavy hair, green eyes, and a saucy, freckled nose. She was wearing a skirt and blouse and her usual flat sandals. She came up and kissed me on the mouth. Then she reached up and rubbed some of her lipstick from the corner of my lip.

"Hello, Ralph," she said. "Your nose is peeling again."

"You know I never could tan," I grinned.

"We've missed you," she said. "We haven't seen you for ages."

"We'll make sure he comes home more often," my father said.

I started to say something, but my mother put her arm around Ellen and said, "Let's go in to dinner."

We had dinner. On the table there was a bouquet of white gardenias Ellen had brought. My father made the usual jokes and his usual reminiscences about the troops. After it was over my mother shooed us out of the house.

We went on to the porch. Ellen sat down on the porch couch. She took a deep breath. "Indian summer," she said. "The air is hazy and there's a smell of woodsmoke and burning leaves. It's the best time of year. Don't you think so, Ralph?"

I leaned against the porch railing and took out my pipe. "Do you mind if I smoke the old incinerator?"

She looked up at me in surprise. "You know I always liked your pipe. You look perfectly handsome in a pipe."

"Thanks," I said, filling it from my pouch. "I have to keep it at home. There's no time in the barracks for a pipe. You go on patrol, go to bed, wake up, and go on another patrol. No good for pipe smokers. They need leisure."

"You sound a little sullen tonight," she said. "What happened, Ralph? You stayed away from home for ten days. You never did that before."

"Maybe you're just getting to know me."

"After all these years? No. I know you from way back. I remember you from the days when we used to hitch-hike to Walden Pond. Or don't you remember?"

"Yes, I do," I said, puffing on my pipe. And I did remember. She had been a gawky little kid then, with thin, spindly legs, a skinny, boyish body, and a tense face.

"We used to go to Walden Pond," she said. "It was where Thoreau had communed with nature. I often hoped some of the atmosphere would rub off on to us. I used to examine you closely to see if you were turning into a brilliant philosopher."

"It didn't work," I said shortly.

She looked sharply at me. "Nothing seems to be working tonight," she said quietly. "At dinner you hardly spoke a word. It's not like you."

"I'm sorry. I'm acting like a moron tonight. I wish I was like Pa. I don't think I'm cut out to be a cop."

"Why not?"

"Listen. I put in over a hundred duty hours a week. I'd like more time off. At least, I'd like evenings to myself. No wonder they retire a trooper at the age of fifty. He's all beat out by then."

"But you knew all this when you went in. Ralph," she said gently, "what's her name?"

"Whose name?"

"The girl you met."

I reddened. "How did you know I met a girl?"

"It shows," she said. "What else could it be Ralph, what's her name?"

"Manette Venus," I said.

"I see," she said. "You met this girl and that's why you haven't been home. And she doesn't want you to be a trooper, either."

"All right," I said.

"Where did you meet this Manette Venus?"

"What difference does it make? I was at a bar having a glass of beer. We started talking. She was lonely. She was a stranger in Danford. She knew nobody."

"So she went to a bar-room and picked you up. And never mind the misguided gallantry. You never picked up a girl in your life. You wouldn't know how. And what does she look like? Smooth, sultry blonde? Sexy legs and rhinestone high heels on her shoes?"

"She's a blonde, yes. But not——"

"What does she do?" Ellen interrupted. "Work as a hostess in a dance hall?"

"No. She's in the office of the Staley Woollen Company."

"But why pick you? What does she want? A good time? What is she asking for?"

"Nothing. She——"

"You're a big hick," she said, her voice tense and distraught. "She must want something. You went after her like a seal after a fish. What happens now? What happens when she spends all your money and gets tired of you?"

"No. You have her wrong. Listen, she's in trouble——"

"You don't owe me any explanation," she said, her face set and rigid. "I'm the little kid next door, remember? I don't have any ring on my finger. We talked about marriage, sure. But what's talk? It would be better if I went into a saloon and wiggled a snaky hip at you."

"Look, you're making this sound a lot worse than it is. It's childish——"

"Is it? It's because I thought you were too good for any bar-room girl. And it's because I'm a poor sport. And it's because I happen to be in love with a big lug and I don't want to let him go. Now do you want me to open the rest of my diary?"

"No," I said. "Ellen——" I left the

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railing and went to her. I reached out and tried to take her hands. She slid away and stood up.

"Ellen," I said sharply, "you have it all wrong. I told Manette—"

"I could kill Manette," she said. She fled down the stairs and ran across the sidewalk to her house.

I didn't go after her. I knew her, and I knew her temper. It would be a few hours before she simmered down. Until then she would not talk to me. And I knew I couldn't go into the house and face my mother, either.

So I took a walk.

. . . . . .

I was back in the barracks at 3 p.m. the next day. Thursday. I signed in. Stan Maleski was duty sergeant.

"You're back early," Maleski said to me. "You're not due in until four."

"There's somebody I have to phone," I said.

I went into the guardroom and called the Staley Woollen Company office. They told me Manette Venus was out. She had left at noon and had not yet returned.

I called Glen Road and spoke to Mrs. Reece. She said Manette had come home about twelve-thirty and had gone right out again. No, Manette had not explained why she had left work early. But she had told Mrs. Reece to expect her home at six.

At five o'clock I went on patrol with Phil Kerrigan. It had been cloudy, windy, and warm all day. At dark it began to rain gustily and fitfully.

There had been a gas station hold-up in Connecticut and the two armed men had last been seen heading for the Massachusetts line in a stolen car. We had the cruiser in a roadblock at Route 114. We stood beside it, the intermittent rain slashing at our blue raincoats, streaming down our faces, dripping from our cap visors.

I was standing near the open window of the car and I heard the crackle of the shortwave radio. I opened the door and poked my head in. The time was 9.10.

The radio was saying "—hold-up men have been apprehended by Cruiser 19. A signal Seven for Cruiser 36. Cruiser 36. A signal Seven."

I called to Kerrigan. "The roadblock's off," I said. "But there's a message for us to call our station."

Kerrigan got into the car and radioed the barracks. The dispatcher told us to come in immediately.

Sergeant Ray Beaupre was at the duty desk. I knew it was bad as soon as I saw him. His voice had a tinge of strain in it as he told us Captain Walsh was waiting for me in the troop commander's office.

I went in there, my dripping raincoat making a puddle on the floor. Walsh was in civilian clothes, his necktie hastily knotted and askew, his face darkened by a day-long stubble. He said, "They tell me you know a girl named Manette Venus."

"Yes, sir," I said. "Why? What's wrong?"

"It's bad news," he said.

I waited, my heart beating harder.

"You don't know what I'm talking about, do you?"

"No, sir," I said.

"Manette Venus has been murdered."

"What?" I asked stupidly, as though I hadn't heard him. "Who?"

"Manette Venus," he said quietly. "She was murdered. Tonight about seven-thirty. The Danford cops notified us over an hour ago. The body is at the Danford morgue now. Come along with me. We're going to see if we can bring in the murderer."

When we left the barracks and got into Captain Walsh's car the rain had stopped.

"Where are we going, sir?" I asked.

"Out to the Glen Road house where they found the body," Walsh said, starting the car. "How long did you know Manette Venus?"

"About a week, sir."

"Do you know anything about her?"

"She worked at Staley Woollen. And she's originally from Cleveland. Maybe her office can tell us something. They must have an employment record on her."

"The Danford cops are checking there now. There's a record of a former work address in Chicago."

"Cleveland?" I said.

"Chicago, not Cleveland. Her work sheet says she came from Chicago. Why? Did she tell you she came from Cleveland?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hmmm. Do you know if she was in any trouble?"

"Yes, sir. I think she was, but she didn't tell me what it was."

"Didn't you ask her?"

"Yes, sir. But she kept stalling me about it. She promised to tell me about it today, but I couldn't contact her. When I came back from my night pass, I couldn't reach her. Then I had to go out on patrol."

"Did she seem worried?"

"Yes, sir. She was afraid of something. She used to carry a loaded gun in her handbag, a 32-20 Colt."

"Did she have a licence for it?"

I stared at the road ahead. "No, sir," I finally said.

"And you made no report of it?"

"No, sir."

His mouth was grim. "GHQ isn't going to like that."

"I'm sorry, sir."

"You're going to be sorrier than you think. You know why? Because Manette Venus was killed by a bullet from a .32." . .

WOODEN traffic barriers had been put up on Glen Road, blocking off the civilian cars and the curious onlookers. Around the Reece house was a cluster of Danford police cars. The house was ablaze with lights, and spotlights from the police cars were sweeping the rear yard and the woods.

Captain Walsh stepped out of his sedan and I followed him. There was a group of plain-clothes officers huddled under the lantern post. One of them pushed through and came over to us immediately. Walsh introduced him to me as Captain Charles Angsman, Chief of Detectives, Danford Police.

"You find anything yet?" Walsh asked him.

"Nothing new since I spoke to you on the phone, Fred." Angsman said briskly. "The Reeces came home at seven-thirty. As they were getting out of their car they saw this figure run out of the house and head for the woods. They went inside and found Manette dead in her room, shot through the head. They called us. We had a squad car here in less than two minutes."

"You think the suspect is still in the woods?"

"I wouldn't know. He was seen running in there. It's a patch of about three or four square miles. I've got it surrounded and cut off. Now we've got to sit and wait for daylight before we can go in. Unless that bloodhound of yours can do something. When is he coming?"

"He should be here any minute," Walsh said. "I called them over an hour and a half ago. He has to be brought from the Andover barracks. In the meantime we ought to keep the back yard cleared so the dog can pick up a scent."

"I did what you told me," Angsman said in a clipped voice. "I've tried to keep my men out of the yard." He stared at me. "Lindsey, what do you know about this girl?"

"She never told Lindsey anything," Walsh cut in. "He knew her only a week."

"Mrs. Reece said he phoned the girl this afternoon."

"But she wasn't home," I said.

I turned around because I heard a car approaching. It was a pale-blue State Police cruiser with a matching two-wheeled, metal-covered trailer hooked to it. I saw the nicked aperture in the side of the trailer and I knew that Corporal Sam Dutra had arrived from the Andover sub-station with the bloodhound, Nick.

Dutra stepped out and came over to us.

There was a conference. When it was over Dutra scratched his short sandy hair dubiously.

He said, "What was the weather here?"

"Intermittent rain," Angsman said. "Foggy and warm."

"Any downpours after the suspect ran into the woods?" Dutra asked.

"No downpours," Angsman said.

"That helps," Dutra said. "I don't suppose the killer left anything behind so we can get a scent from it."

"No," Angsman said.

"Well, we'll try," Dutra said. "Let me see the spot where the killer was last seen."

We went into the back yard, crossing the wet springy grass. At the edge of the woods, Captain Angsman stopped. "About here," he said. "This is where the Reeces last saw him."

Dutra went down on his knees, his flashlight moving back and forth along the ground. "There's some bent grass here, Captain," he said.

"Some of my men," Angsman said brusquely. "They were here looking before I stopped them."

Dutra's young face was serious. "Then this here is no good, sir," he said. "I'll have to go farther into the woods."

He pushed into the underbrush. We waited. I could see his flashlight bobbing around in the blackness.

His flashlight stopped bobbing and focused steadily. Then it went off. He came out towards us.

He wiped moisture from his face. "There's some broken twigs in there, like somebody went crashing through. I marked it. Now we'll see what the dog can do with it."

Dutra went back to the trailer and opened it. He brought out the bloodhound. The dog whined eagerly.

Dutra fastened a leather harness to the dog's chest. He uncoiled a twenty-foot strap and hooked it to the harness. Then he picked up the dog in his arms.

He came back into the yard. Walsh handed me a flashlight and said, "You'll go with him, Ralph. Signal us if you find anything."

Dutra went into the woods, carrying the dog. I followed him, snapping on the flashlight. Dutra twisted his head. "I wouldn't use the flashlight, Ralph," he said. "You'll only distract the dog. Your eyes will get used to the dark in a few moments."

I snapped off the light. Now I couldn't see anything. I stumbled into tree branches, scratching my face. I trailed behind Dutra by ear and my eyes became accustomed to the darkness. I saw Dutra put the dog down, but he held the leash taut, keeping the head high.

The dog strained at the leash and trotted deeper into the woods. Dutra

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twisted the strap around his wrist and followed him. He called back to me over his shoulder. "I think he's picked up something."

We came to a small glade in the woods. It was dotted with broken trees and stumps. At the far edge of it was a small ramshackle hut with a single window and a hanging, gaping door. The dog whined. Suddenly he increased his speed and started straight for it.

Dutra pulled on the leash and stopped him. The dog turned on his haunches and whined again.

I came up. Dutra adjusted the gun in his hand. "The killer may be in there," he said quietly.

"Cover me," I said, breathing heavily. "I'll find out."

"No, wait here. It's my job—" Dutra started to say.

"This one happens to be on me," I said. I ran forward along the edge of the glade, my gun cocked.

"Ralph," he called hoarsely.

I didn't answer him. I moved from tree to tree. I ran across the open space to the side of the hut.

I flattened against it and looked in the tiny window. There was no pane. In a shadowed corner of the hut I saw a darker shadow. The shadow took image—a huddled figure on the floor. I saw a pale arm dangling out a revolver clutched in the fist.

I waved to Dutra to come on. I saw him dash across the clearing, the dog leaping with great strides ahead of him.

I ran for the door and broke in. A startled white face rose in the corner and screamed shrilly. I dived for it, my hand going for the revolver, knocking it out and away. I heard Dutra's footsteps outside. Then there were three sharp revolver shots as Dutra signalled the others.

The figure screamed again as I bore in and pinned it down to the floor. But something was wrong. It yielded too easily. I was conscious of a soft, slender body against mine. A scent of perfume.

I reached out and pulled the head up. I looked at the shocked, glazed eyes, the freckled nose and the black lustrous hair. It was Ellen Levesque.

She was slumped against the wall, head falling, eyes dull and unseeing under the beam of the flashlight. She was in a state of shock and she couldn't make out who I was. When I spoke to her she clutched at me and said, "I didn't mean to kill her. I didn't mean to kill her." She kept saying it over and over again.

Dutra picked up the revolver and put it in his pocket. He patted the dog absently. "I never figured it would be a girl," he said in a puzzled voice. "You've been talking to her like you know her, Ralph."

"Yes, I know her," I said bitterly. "I know her well."

"Oh," Dutra said uncomfortably. He took the gun from his pocket and examined it with his flashlight. It had a two-inch barrel and a pearl handle and I knew immediately where it had come from.

I lifted Ellen in my arms. I went by the dog, sitting quietly by the door, his tongue hanging out, panting. I carried Ellen out of the shack and started across the glade. I met the other men hurrying towards us.

. . . . . .

They took her to Danford Police Headquarters, to the women's detention ward. They made me wait outside the room. I paced the cold floor. Captain Walsh came out, his face hard and rigid. I went to him. "How is she?" I asked.

"She's snapped out of it," he said in a cold, flat voice. "She's made a confession. They're going to book her for murder. No bail, of course."

"I have to see her, sir," I said.

He looked at me for a moment, his mouth pinched. "All right, come on."

We went down the corridor. There was a steel mesh door and a pale, middle-aged woman in a blue uniform coat and skirt. She opened the door. We were in a bare, grey-walled room. There was a table and six chairs. There were a half-dozen men standing in a corner of the room, one of them Captain Angsman.

Ellen was sitting at the table alone. When she saw me she jumped up and ran to me. Her arms went around my neck. "Ralph," she said simply. She buried her little freckled nose in my uniform.

I looked around at the impassive faces.

"Please," I said to them. "Leave me alone with her."

Feet scraped uncomfortably. I could hear Captain Walsh talking to them in a low voice. He came over to me and said, "They'll give you five minutes. And the matron will have to stay at the door."

WE sat at the table. The matron leaned against the door.

"A cigarette?" I asked Ellen.

She took the cigarette. As she bent forward for a light I saw the bedraggled skirt and muddy coat. There was a smear of dried blood on the collar.

"You hurt?" I asked. "Did they hurt you in any way?"

"Not them," she said. "I'm all right now." She breathed the smoke deeply.

I swallowed hard. "To come into that shack in the woods and find you—" I swallowed again. "I mean, sixty miles from home, in a patch of woods in Danford with a gun in your hand, a suspect in a murder. Everything happening like this all at once."

"It was horrible," she said. "Horrible. Manette Venus is dead, and I killed her. It makes a tragic triangle, doesn't it?"

"But how could it happen? How did you get there?"

"I came to Danford to see her," Ellen said.

"When?"

"Manette Venus. I knew it was all over between us."

"But it was it," I said. "You never gave me a chance to explain—"

"Let me finish," she interrupted. "A girl wants to marry a man with a certain strength of character. If he takes up with a bar-room hussy, if he's attracted to that type, even if it's just an interlude, it could happen again and again."

"But you've blown this up too big," I said. "You have it all wrong."

"Everything is wrong now," she said. "But I didn't come to Danford on my own. I was talking to your father today, after you left. Your folks knew you were acting strangely and they started to question me. It came out about Manette, about your thinking of leaving the troops, everything. Your father was terribly upset. He said it was an infatuation, nothing more. And if you were so confused you couldn't think for yourself, we had to stop you. Then he said he had to go to Manette Venus and explain it to her. He asked me to take him to the train in his wheel chair. He's not well at all, Ralph and, of course, we couldn't let him go. And the only way to stop him was to go myself."

She drew on the cigarette. Her hand trembled, shaking the ash from the tip. "So I called Staley Woollen and got Manette Venus' home address. I took the train to Danford and got to the station at seven tonight. It was raining and very windy. I took a cab to Glen Road. It was dark and lonely out there. The house was in the woods. I told the driver not to wait because I didn't know how long I'd be."

There was a scrape of feet as the matron at the door changed her position and looked at the big wall clock. Ellen went on hurriedly. "I rang the front bell. There was no answer. There were lights on in the house, but the wind was howling so, I thought nobody could hear the ring. I called out. Then I tried the door. It was unlocked. I went in. There was nobody downstairs. Then I heard a man talking on a radio upstairs. I went up. There was a light coming from under the door of a room. I knocked at it. The radio went off and a girl's voice asked, 'Who is it?'"

"I told her it was Ellen Levesque, a friend of Ralph Lindsey's. She opened the door after a moment. It was cold in the room. The window was open and the curtain was whipping around. The rain had come in because the floor was wet. Manette was wearing a quilted housecoat. I expected her to be pretty and she was. I expected her to be nervous, too, and she was.

"We stood there sizing each other up like a couple of alley cats. She asked me what I wanted and I started to tell her. She wouldn't listen. She asked me frantically to leave. I told her I wouldn't go until I talked. I wasn't travelling sixty miles to be kicked out before I had my say. She started to sob and ran for the dressing-table. She opened a drawer and took out a pearl-handled revolver. She pointed it at me and screamed for me to get out.

"I was mad as anything. I did a silly thing, probably. I made a grab for the gun. I got it away from her and we started to fight over it. The gun went off. Just then I slipped on the wet floor. The next thing I knew there was a flash of lights in my head and I lost consciousness.

"I woke up," Ellen said, "with the revolver still in my hand. There was a bump and a cut on the back of my head. Manette Venus was lying on the floor. There was blood all over her face and she was dead. I got up and went to the window. I was dizzy and my head was hurting. Outside, I heard a car drive up to the house and stop. I got so scared and panic-stricken that I ran. I ran down the stairs and out of the house. I didn't know where I was. I kept running, that's all. Then I found myself in an empty shack somewhere and the gun was still in my hand. You know the rest, Ralph."

"When they brought you here," I asked, "did they threaten you or anything?"

"No. Just questions over and over again."

"Did you admit firing the gun?"

"Yes, I did." She looked at me. "But there was something strange about it. After the gun went off, we kept struggling."

"For how long?"

"At least a few seconds. I don't understand—"

I shook my head. "People have effects, Ellen. Even after they're shot they don't usually drop in that split-second."

She rubbed her eyes. "It was so confusing. I wish I could really remember what happened. Anyway, I swear it was an accident. I wouldn't want to harm her."

"I know," I said softly. "We'll see what we can do."

"But now," she said urgently, "I mean now, I can't stay here—"

The matron came over then and

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tapped Ellen's arm. "Sorry, dearie," she said. "I'm going to catch it as it is. Time's up, and we've got things to do. Maybe you can talk to him again tomorrow."

"Listen," I said to Ellen. "I'll do all I can. Anything—"

"Why?" she asked in a muted voice. "Because I killed your girl friend?" She stood up and moved listlessly to the door. "Just do one thing. At least, call my father and mother. Please."

"The minute I get to a phone," I said. "And I'll be back as soon as they let me."

Outside in the corridor Captain Walsh was waiting for me.

I went into the telephone booth and called Cambridge. When I came out, Mrs. Levesque's shrill sobbing was still ringing in my ears. Captain Walsh was impatiently walking the floor.

We went outside, into the night air and away from the sour smell of the jail. Walsh said, "You drive. It'll give you something to do."

I drove the cruiser back to the barracks. Walsh sat beside me smoking his cigar. When we reached the blue neon State Police sign and turned into the driveway, he coughed brusquely and said, "Take the rest of the night off, Ralph. Go home. Your father will want to see you."

"Thanks," I said shortly.

"The Levesques coming out?"

"They're on their way."

"It's always tougher on the parents," Walsh said. He stepped out of the car. "You get away from the barracks as soon as you can. The newspaper men will be milling around. I can see the headlines tomorrow morning: 'Girl Kills Rival Over Love Of State Trooper.' You've made a rotten mess for us, son."

With that he went inside. I watched him, a flush creeping over my face. He had never shown a shred of emotion in the entire time I had known him. And I never hated him the way I did now.

I went upstairs and changed into civilian clothes. When I came down again the reporters were buzzing around in the corridor. I went out the back way. It was past midnight. I took my own car from the parking area.

But I didn't go home to Cambridge. I couldn't face my father, nor the wordless pain in him, nor the silent accusation of responsibility for what had happened.

I drove instinctively, like a homing pigeon, to the place where it had all started to the beginning, to a small bar on Berkshire Street downtown in Danford.

The place was more crowded than last time. It was noisier, more smoke-filled. The same bartender was on duty. I hunched on to a stool and ordered a bourbon and ginger. The bartender mechanically put the drink in front of me. I gulped it down. The bartender began to move away.

"Wait a minute," I said to him. "Remember me?"

He looked at me carefully. He shook his head.

"Wednesday night," I said. "A week ago. About six o'clock. I was sitting here drinking beer."

He shook his head again. "You're not a regular. A lot of strays come in here, mister. Don't get insulted because I don't remember you."

I said, "A girl came in. Blonde, pretty, sapphire-blue eyes, grey suit, no hat."

His face twitched in thought. I said, "She ordered an Old Fashioned; but she didn't drink it. Remember now?"

He smiled slyly. "Now I do. Then she came over and picked you up. She took you out of here. How did you make out, pal?"

"Never mind," I said shortly. "Just tell me if she was in here before."

He bristled now. "How do I know? And who's asking the questions? What are you, a cop, or something?"

"Yes, a cop."

"Sure." His lips twitched. "What are they doing, robbing the cradle now? Go away, you make me laugh."

I took out my wallet and showed him the badge. His eyes moved back and forth as he read the inscription. But the sneering, disbelieving look stayed on his face.

I put the wallet back. "I asked if she was here before."

"I never seen her."

"Afterwards?" I asked.

"Never saw her again. I wouldn't forget a dish like her." He was edging away from me.

I called him back. "I'll have another drink. The same as before."

He brought it to me. I reached for my wallet again to pay him. He saw the holstered S&W revolver when I unbuttoned my coat.

I gulped down the second drink. I sat there and stared at the bar mirror and the red scratches on my face. The liquor made the tip of my nose and my lips numb but I wasn't drunk. I was thinking of Ellen Levesque and the birdhouse she used to have in her back yard.

One time she had found a robin with a broken wing and she had cried over it and made a splint for the wing and built the birdhouse and padded it with straw. When the wing healed it was crooked and she painstakingly taught the bird to fly again. And he did, fluttering awkwardly at first, then he flew away and never came back. And no matter how I tried, I couldn't picture her in Manette's room. Not with a pearl-handled revolver in her hand and Manette Venus dead on the floor near her.

AFTER twenty minutes I still had no answer. My glass remained empty on the bar. Cigarette butts piled up in the glass ash tray. I heard the front door open and a gush of fresh air hit the room and swirled the smoke. Suddenly the sound in the place became muffled and died away. I turned my drooping head, my eyes moving along the floor. I saw black shoes and shiny black puttees. Then flared dark blue breeches. Then the square-set visored cap, and under it the rigid face of Patrolman Phil Kerrigan. I peered behind him and saw a young trooper named Ravelli.

"Hello, Phil," I said to Kerrigan. "You're far off your territory."

His face was expressionless. "We got a call at the barracks. They said an armed kid with a scratched face was here impersonating a state trooper. Asking all kinds of questions. You, Ralph?"

I started to laugh. I couldn't stop.

Kerrigan looked around. "They also said you were getting drunk, Ralph—"

"I'm not drunk," I said. "I'm a little numb, but I'm not drunk."

The bartender came, bent over and spoke to Kerrigan. "It's all right, isn't it?" he asked worriedly.

"It's all right," Kerrigan said. "Thanks. You did the best thing." He turned to me and his big strong fingers bit into my shoulder. "Let's go, kid. Back to the barracks."

"Captain Walsh gave me the night off. Thanks for the interest in me but—"

"Look," he whispered harshly. "You're drinking in a public place. If the duty sarge finds out, they'll take your badge."

"I'm not drunk. I've had two—"

"You've half-drunk now. Come on."

"Take your hand away," I said thinly. "I'll go on my own two feet."

"Fine," Kerrigan said. "Walsh has gone home. We'll sneak you by Maleski and sign you in."

We went outside. A state cruiser was at the kerb. Ravelli turned down all the windows and helped me into the back seat. We drove off. Kerrigan twisted his head around. "How do you feel?"

"How do you expect me to feel?" I asked.

"All right, so you had a bad time tonight. Nobody expects you to be a tin god about it. But next time you want to get drunk, go home and do it. Then nobody'll see you."

"I'm not drunk," I said stubbornly.

"You weren't lookin' too good," Ravelli said quietly. "Now here's what we do. When we get back to the barracks, you'll walk in alone. We'll be right behind you. Don't talk to Maleski. Sign in. We'll be waiting at the stairway and we'll help you to your room."

"You don't have to stick out your neck for me," I said.

"Get this straight," Kerrigan said tersely. "We're not thinking of you. If your name wasn't Lindsey—if it wasn't for your old man—I'd turn you in right now."

"You never knew my old man—"

"I've heard of him. Now you'll do as Hank Ravelli says. We'll wait for you at the stairs. If you slip on them going up and Maleski runs out to have a look, then you're finished."

. . . .

I was all right in the morning. No headache. My mouth was parched and my teeth felt coated, but nothing else.

I showered, shaved, dressed in my uniform, and came down to breakfast. In the dining-room I saw Captain Walsh at his table with another man. He was a slightly stooped, gangling man in a rumpled grey flannel suit. I recognised him as Detective-Lieutenant Edward Newpole from State Police General Headquarters in Boston.

Newpole looked up, saw me, and waved his fork. I waved back to him.

After chow I lit a cigarette and went to the duty board. I looked up my patrol assignment. My name was scratched. Then I heard Captain Walsh call me. I turned around and followed him to his office. Ed Newpole was sitting there. He stood up and put his hand out.

"How's your father, Ralph?" he asked.

"He's well, sir," I said.

"I guess he might be a little sore at me," Newpole said. "I ain't seen him for a couple of months."

"He often talks of you," I said.

"Probably nothing good," Newpole said dolefully. "We worked together in the troops for a long time. Old Walt never forgave me for going on the detectives."

Captain Walsh, lighting a cigar, peered down the end of it. He shook the match and said briskly, "You've got a special assignment, Ralph. An investigation with Newpole. The Manette Venus case."

I stood stock-still.

"Go change to civilian clothes," Walsh said. "It's a break for you, Lindsey. You've got a chance to watch Lieutenant Newpole work. Keep your mouth shut unless you're asked, and maybe you'll learn something." He turned to Newpole. "I never approved of using a boot," he said in a clipped voice. "I've got enough experienced men."

"You know this is an exception, Fred," Newpole said smoothly. "The boy not only knew the deceased, but he

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also knows the suspect." He nodded to me. "Go ahead and change, Ralph."

I left them and went to my room. When I came down Newpole was no longer in the building. I found him outside in the driveway, standing by a black headquarters sedan with civilian number plates.

"If you don't mind," I said to him, "first, I have to find out about Ellen. Maybe they released her on bail—"

"No," Newpole said.

I said, "What can they really do to her, Lieutenant?"

"Well, I spoke to the D.A. He's going to arraign her on a first-degree murder charge this morning."

"That would never stick," I said. "If it was an accident—?"

"It might stick, and mightn't. Me, I never speculate." He got into the car. I went around and sat in the front seat beside him. He said, "How do you like it here at Troop E?"

"All right, up until last night. Now the boys look right through me, as if I'm not in the room."

"Well, they'll get over it," Newpole said cheerfully. "You know how these youngsters are. Nobody likes to see the troop get a bad name. You get mixed up with two girls, and one kills the other and it gets into the papers—well, it don't look so good, does it?"

"If they want my badge," I said, "they can have it."

"If they want your badge," Newpole said, starting the car, "they'll take it away without asking. You've only got three months in. You don't even rate a court-martial."

"I thought if I were free, if I could work on this on the outside, I could do more for Ellen."

"You'd do better with a badge in your pocket and authority behind you."

He drove along until he reached a cafe. He pulled up. "It's time for coffee," he said.

"We just had coffee."

"It'll give us a chance to talk. I talk better with a cup of coffee in my hand." He opened the door and stepped out.

He came back with two steaming cardboard coffee containers. Newpole cocked a side glance at me. "I hear you threw a little wing-ding at a bar last night."

I started to answer him, but he went on, "It gets around. You can't outfox an old hand like Maleski. He's seen every trick in the book."

"Also because I'm Walt Lindsey's son," I said bitterly. "Why don't you say it? If it was anybody else who did it—"

"A boot, you mean?" Newpole said amiably. "Sure, he'd be out. I guess nobody wants to stick a knife in your old man. So you got a break."

"I wasn't drunk," I said. "I only had two."

"I've seen folks get drunk on one. Anyway, let's say you were upset."

"Yes, I was upset. It was Ellen Levesque. They have her in a cell. A kid who would never step on an ant."

He sipped carefully on his coffee. "I remember her around your house. Cute little black-haired girl? Freckles?"

"All over her nose."

"That's her," Newpole said. "Maybe we'd better start this thing from the beginning—with the other one. How did you meet Manette Venus?"

I told him. I began with the barroom on Berkshire Street. I told him of the gun, of her fear, everything. When I was through he said, "Did you really fall for this Manette?"

"I don't know," I said. "She was a beautiful girl, the kind who would attract any man."

"You wouldn't have gone away and married her?"

"I don't think so," I said. "You get all excited about those things in a sudden flash. Then later when you think about them, you're not so sure. Because all the real problems come up and stare you in the face." I twisted around to him. "They sent you down to investigate me, too, didn't they?"

Newpole took a last sip of his coffee and tossed the container out of the window. "Sure, I won't kid you. It's one of the reasons. I'm supposed to take your badge, too, if there's any culpability on your part. That's the word the Commissioner used, culpability."

"And that's why I was assigned to the case. So you can keep an eye on me, watch me."

Newpole scratched the end of his nose. "Can't deny that, either," he said sadly. "But you got to look at it this way, too. It's a small, handpicked organisation. It's got a good reputation. The Commissioner is pretty fussy about it. He has to be. A trooper is out alone most of the time. Sometimes twenty, thirty miles away from his base. When a man's alone and far away, he has to carry a lot of authority. You've got to be sure of a man like that. Course there's also an obligation to your old man. But if you get panicky and run—if you quit—"

"No, I won't quit," I said. "Not now. They'll have to kick me out."

"Good," Newpole said, pleased. "It's the best thing you've said. I was afraid maybe you'd go soft—" He looked at his watch. "Well, I think it's time to go down to the Danford Police and stir things up a bit."

WE were standing in the office of the Homicide Squad at Danford Police Headquarters. There was a long, scarred walnut table, and, sitting behind it with the Venus file in his hands, was Captain Charles Angsman.

"This is what we've got on Manette Venus so far," Angsman said, tapping the folder. "The girl came to Danford a month ago to work in the mill. The Reeces have no children, so they rented a spare room to her. We don't know yet where Manette Venus came from originally. There's a work ad from Chicago, and that might help. We sent out a broadcast for next of kin. It's going to take time to find out. Lindsey, you sure you don't know anything about her?"

"I guess she never told Lindsey much," Newpole cut in. "What else, Charlie? What about her employment record at Staley Woollen?"

"Nothing, Ed. She gave her boss, Reece, her social security number, the old work address in Chicago and nothing else. I sent her fingerprints to Washington." Angsman yawned. "What are you so interested in, Ed?"

"Well," Newpole said, "I was wondering how strong a case you had against Ellen Levesque."

"Strong enough," Angsman said. "We found her with the gun. She admits firing the shot."

"You got a statement from her?"

"Yes. She admitted it in front of witnesses. It'll stand up. I don't care how many friends she has in the S.P., or how many connections, either."

"Nobody said anything about connections," Newpole said coldly. "And nobody asked for a break for her, and nobody's trying to cover anything. And that goes from Boston all the way here."

Newpole tapped Angsman's shoulder. "Come on, we'll all go to the Reece house."

I sat in a corner of the Reece living room and watched Ed Newpole talk to Mrs. Reece. He was polite and sympathetic. When he was through we found out Manette had come home at six last night. The Reeces left five minutes later to attend a dinner of the Danford Pioneers. Because Mrs. Reece wasn't feeling too well, they had come away early and arrived home at seven-thirty. As they stopped the car they saw the front door open and someone run out of the house and disappear into the woods in back. They had run upstairs to see if Manette was there. Her door was open. She was lying on the floor of the bedroom, covered with blood. They had closed the door, rushed down and phoned the police.

Newpole smiled reassuringly at her. "You touched nothing in the bedroom, I'm sure."

"Of course not," Mrs. Reece said, her fingers plucking at her throat. "We took one quick glance and ran."

"And you have no description of the person running from the house," Newpole said. "The light was bad?"

"Very poor," Mrs. Reece said. "And we were a distance away."

"Did Manette ever speak to you of her past, Mrs. Reece?"

"No. She was well-bred and exceptionally quiet. Many times I tried to draw her out, but she evaded the subject."

"She lived with you a month," Newpole said casually. "I bet the whole time she was here something was bothering her."

"Yes," Mrs. Reece said. "Sometimes at night we could hear her crying in her room. But never a word from her. It would break your heart to listen to her. When I spoke of it, she said it was nightmares."

Newpole tugged at his chin. "She never mentioned having enemies, did she?"

"No."

"Who were her friends, Mrs. Reece?"

"This young man here, Ralph Lindsey." She turned to me and smiled tiredly. "You were her friend weren't you, Mr. Lindsey?"

"Yes," I said. "I think I was her friend."

Newpole said, "Did she ever mention a Cole Boothbay?"

"No," Mrs. Reece said. "But there was a girl named Helen Toledo. An older girl."

Newpole asked how it was spelled and he wrote it down in a tattered, dog-eared notebook. He said, "Did Helen Toledo ever come here, Mrs. Reece?"

"Twice. And not Manette's type at all. Helen Toledo was a big redheaded girl. She was a waitress in some saloon. The second time she was here I could smell liquor on her breath. I'm sure Manette didn't drink. She didn't even smoke. And she did love this house so, and all our cherished antiques. I was the one who asked Fulton to board Manette here. Not only because the money was helpful, but also for her companionship."

She smiled vaguely and sadly at us. Her eyes were focused somewhere in the distance, going back to a different time, a different era. "This house wasn't always like this," she said softly. "In those days it was a country house, and when Fulton and I first came here it was bright and shiny like a new penny." Her head flicked, her sad eyes fastened on Newpole. "Times change, sir," she said. "Fortunes fall. We have many debts and we are grateful to the Staleys for providing Fulton with a job. But it is merely a job, a subordinate position."

Angsman bent forward in his chair. "Mrs. Reece, about Mr. Lindsey?"

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Carson was in that state of excitement known to publishers who have on their hands a possible runaway. Stafford himself was the fair-haired boy. Even Carse spoke to him with a note of deference, and old Redfield was threatening to leave his late Norman castle in Connecticut to preside at a dinner—a thing he had not done since R. & C. had launched, ten years before, the Hartley, "Notes and Confessions."

We've done it, Stafford thought; we're set. All his planning and thinking for months, in and out of the office, had been aimed at bringing about exactly this state of affairs.

Yet now, between himself and the pure enjoyment of his triumph, stood his mental image of Faith Goodbind—her look of withholding, of almost desperate reticence.

He tried to shake himself free of his sense of—what? Not guilt, certainly. She had written her book and presumably had wanted to sell it, or she wouldn't have sent it to a publishing house. The sales campaign had been unsensational, the author scarcely mentioned.

Yet her face haunted him—physically as well as mentally—for Bronsky had got the one good photograph he had hoped for and it now hung, twice as large as life, on the wall opposite Stafford's desk, a symbol of his triumph.

Stafford looked from the photograph to the stack of letters. Then he took up one that had been put aside and glanced over it again: "... that someone must protest in behalf of a simple, kindly people too humble to defend themselves. I am sure there are laws of libel or slander covering such outrageous violation of the privacy of ..."

Anonymous, of course. Two River postmark. Crackpot—there was always somebody.

Still, he thought, he ought to look into it. A girl like that, not used to this sort of thing. Might throw her into a panic. He could not, in reality, imagine Faith Goodbind in a panic. But he ignored this thought.

He swept the letters into a pile and went into Carson's office. There he slid them on to the desk so that they fanned across it, covering most of its surface. He handed him the one he had withheld.

"Thought I should take another run up," he said.

Carson looked up at him, then at the mass of letters. He barely glanced at the one charging libel and slander. He said nothing, but glanced first at Stafford, then out of the window, a look of bleak amusement on his face. Stafford was uncomfortable and irritated with himself for being so.

"I'll give Hampton a ring," he said and thought his voice sounded lame. "Time we lured him up again — keep his interest aroused." He did not add that he knew Hampton had been up already, and that the luring was not being done by Redfield and Carson.

Carson gave him a baffling look, and said, "Go ahead, son."

With dignity, Stafford gathered the letters and returned to his own office. There, before his thoughts had time to become any more confused than they were, he began to be very brisk. He pushed the letters into a brief-case along with a large envelope of press notices; he gave a list of instructions to his secretary; he concentrated for some time on a road map, not admitting to himself that he knew the road quite well. Then he asked his secretary to get Barclay Hampton on the telephone.

He took the instrument himself as soon as she had dialed the number. He could hear the ring go on for some moments before he heard the voice of Hampton's discreet ex-barber.

"Mr. Hampton is out of town ... No, he did not say."

Slowly Stafford replaced the telephone. Out of town. He leaned back in his chair. We were going to call each other up were we? Next time we'd go together. ... Out of town. The old so-and-so. ... Could it possibly be Faith? He didn't think so. But there was something there, all right, and it wasn't the scenery. ...

Well, Well. He grinned to himself, then pulled the zipper to close his brief-case, took up the road map and left.

. . . . . .

Mr. Hampton, who had met Eve at The Saddler's, walked home with her. She hardly noticed him but knew, vaguely, that he walked at her side; also, that he had contrived to do this before.

When they reached her door she turned and, because she had not been gracious to him, said, "Come in, won't you?"

He accepted at once, and she took him to the upstairs parlor. When she looked about her, at the place where Pearl Miller had sat, she knew again that the room would never be as it had been.

It's not the room, she thought; it's me.

EVE had almost forgotten Hampton, and when she turned from putting off her coat she was startled. He's like Papa, she thought. But of course he was not. Papa had been tall, supple as a willow switch, different altogether.

Yet there was something there. The way he suddenly fitted into the room, became a part of it (Jonathan had always moved awkwardly about its fragile elegance); his look of ease, almost of possession; his manner as he moved towards the beautiful little fireplace.

"What a charming house, Miss Larch. You've lived here always?"

"I was born here."

He gazed at her with such obvious admiration that she might have been embarrassed if she had not been, at that moment, indifferent to everything outside her own secret emotions. But because certain gestures were automatic with her, she said, "Would you like tea?"

"I should be delighted."

She went about the task. Handling the tea things, seeing the cup that had chipped when she dropped it, catching the scent of the sliced lemon, brought Pearl back into the room. She'll never be gone, Eve thought heavily.

She turned back to Mr. Hampton and, though she could not think why he had come, was glad he was there. She began to make conversation with the ease and charm that were hers without effort. Mr. Hampton responded with interest. His eyes fairly gleamed as he looked about the room, and at her.

"It's miraculous," he said, still talking of her house, "that it's never been spoiled or tampered with. Do you live here alone?"

She gave him his tea and brought forward the little table so that he could reach the sugar and lemon and biscuits. Then she sat back in her own chair and looked at him. She did not know why she answered as she did. To torture herself or this odd little man? To see shock in someone's face beside her own? She did not know.

She said slowly, with little pauses, "I am in — theory — the heroine of the scene in the hay-barn in Miss Goodbind's book."

Hampton set his teacup on the table. "What is going on in this town! I've felt there was — but what an unbearable situation for you. You must get out of it!"

"Must I?" How could he know that she was trapped, trapped in this house with the ghost of Pearl Miller.

"Of course," he said. "Come away for a time. Come to New York! Have you ever been there?"

"No."

"Delightful! Then you must. I've a tremendous house with nobody in it. I'll have my sister come down from Connecticut. My dear child, you must come."

She stared at him and thought, Why, I believe he's courting me. It seemed impossible and she gave him a look composed, of amusement and gratitude.

But she knew that there was an odd quality in his courtship. She had seen a look such as his face wore now. On the face of that man from the museum who had found his way to her house and let his glance fall upon Grandfather Larch's sherry decanter.

Then she thought, for the first time, But Papa looked like that too. That's what Mamma and I were—collector's pieces; perfect, preserved without flaw.

She rose and walked to the window, and stood looking out at the grey sky, the whipping gusts of snow that rested nowhere but swirled about as the wind took them.

This was the way things happened. She waited, she did nothing, and life opened before her as she went along, always another page turned without effort on her part. A page was turning now; she could go to New York with this man, she could escape everything — Jonathan and Lucy, Pearl Miller. He might even marry me, she thought, for I am indeed a rare piece and particularly well preserved.

What was different? She did not know. She thought again, It is I that am changed; nothing else.

Yet on the surface she was the same. She could turn a gently smiling face upon him and say, "How very kind. But I'm really quite all right. We're all in the same boat, you see."

As she looked at him she realised, with wry amusement, that her whole point of view was becoming colored. Because he was not of Two River Junction, because he was completely removed from the agony Two River was enduring, he seemed as protected and innocent as a child. And kindly, as to a child, she spoke to him.

"Two River's an old town. Its families haven't changed much in the past few generations. Everybody knows everybody else, as in all small towns. And when the town closet, so to speak, is thrown open and all the skeletons tumbled out at once, there aren't many who can refuse to claim at least one of them."

"But how"—he set his cup down—"how did this — this ridiculous situation start? This identification with the book? It's so completely absurd. Miss Goodbind's manuscript was sent out before—"

"I know. It is absurd. I think someone started it."

Both of them sat silent for a time, ignoring the tea. Then she said, "Someone began it. And that's what happened."

"But surely — it must have occurred to someone that these things could have happened anywhere. It didn't have to be Two River Junction."

"I think it occurred to everybody. To all of us — after the first shock. Yet the thing kept growing — almost as if — as if—"

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district attorney's staff. The other man was carrying a black microscope case and I didn't know him.

"Hello, Ed," Lieutenant Granger said. He was chewing gum. "You here, too, Lindsey?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"This is Mr. Hackberry, the assistant D. A.," Granger said to me. "The gentleman with the microscope is Bill Buchanan, the Danford Police ballistician."

We shook hands all around. Hackberry stared at me in disapproval, his mouth narrowed. Then he turned to Angsman and said, "Where's Dr. Dirksen?"

"He had an important meeting," Angsman said.

Hackberry looked at his wrist watch. "I've got to beat it. I have the arraignment at the district court."

"What are you going to charge her with?" Newpole asked.

Hackberry turned as though surprised. "Why, murder, Ed. We'll bind her over for the Grand Jury."

"I don't know," Newpole said mildly "Ellen Levesque claims it was accidental."

Hackberry stared at him. "Oh, she does, huh? Tell him, Chet."

"It's a strong case, Ed." Lieutenant Granger said. "The motive is sound. It's a jealousy affair. Manette had taken Ellen Levesque's boy friend away. So Ellen came down from Cambridge and forced her way into the Reece house—"

"It's not so," I interrupted. "Ellen wasn't jealous."

"Weren't you engaged to her, Ralph?" Granger asked. "And didn't you have a big fight the night before over Manette Venus?"

"Yes. But Ellen was sent to Danford by my father. And she didn't force her way into the house. She said the door was unlocked."

"She made illegal entry," Granger said. "You've got to face the fact she was a trespasser. She forced her way into Manette's room. There was a fight. Manette tried to defend herself with her gun. Ellen took it away from her and killed her with it. Then she took off."

"Ellen was struck on the head, sir," I said stubbornly. "She was unconscious for some time."

"Oh, was she?" Hackberry asked. "Let me tell you this, sonny. I know murderers. I've been up against a lot of them and I know all their angles. We had a doctor examine Ellen Levesque. Yes, there was a laceration and a slight concussion on the back of her head, but Ellen herself admits it occurred in the struggle with Manette Venus.

"She claims she was knocked out. But I'll lay you dollars to doughnuts the girl wasn't knocked out at all. She killed Manette just before the Reeces came home. When she heard them arrive, she made a break for it. She ran over, opened the window and was going to jump. But it was too high. So she ran out of the house with the gun in her hand."

"That's not evidence, sir," I said. "It's only guesswork."

"Don't tell me what's evidence," Hackberry snapped. "The only evidence I need is that Ellen Levesque admits firing that one shot. She had the motive, and the intent was there. The bullet struck Manette Venus, went through and lodged in the wall. It came from a .32-20 Colt which you yourself found on Ellen Levesque in the woods."

"It's neat and tidy except for one thing," Newpole said. "The gun contained copper-jacketed cartridges. The bullet in the wall had no copper jacket."

"You're not going to harp on that, are you?" Hackberry said. He motioned to Buchanan. "Bill, tell them what you found."

Buchanan nodded his head. "We found fragments of the copper jacket in the girl's brain. Those copper jackets will separate sometimes, especially when the bullet strikes a hard object. Bone in the skull, for example."

"Could you determine the calibre of these fragments?" Newpole asked.

"Yes," Buchanan said. "I examined them under the mike. The same as the bullet. .32-20. They match the bullet perfectly. Then there's the empty cartridge shell in the gun cylinder. The shell matches the bullet, too."

"Then there's only one more thing," Newpole said. "I'd appreciate it if Lieutenant Granger would collect all the material evidence in the case. I'd like him to show it to GHQ."

"What for?" Hackberry demanded.

"GHQ would like to have a look," Newpole said gently. "Routine, more or less. You don't mind, do you?"

"No," Hackberry snapped. "That's Lieutenant Granger's department. But you'll have to wait a few days until I'm ready to release it." He left us without another word.

Angsman pursed his mouth in a soundless whistle. "You hurt Hackberry's feelings, Ed. D.A.'s don't like to have their judgment questioned by cops."

"There's always a first time for everybody," Newpole said calmly. "They've questioned my judgment plenty of times. Charlie, would you mind if Bill Buchanan brought those copper fragments into Boston?"

"I don't mind," Angsman said sardonically.

"Fine," Newpole said. He set his hat on his head and motioned to me. "I've got a few things to do, Ralph. So I won't need you for a while. I'll have Chet Granger drive you back to the barracks."

It wasn't until I had put on my uniform again and had reported for duty that I realised it was almost Friday noon. I took a cruiser from the garage and went out on my Staleyville patrol. I used the alternate route on 129, nearing the Staley Woollen Company from the south with the sun at my back. I stopped and waited until I saw the armored pay truck pull away from the factory gate and head down the road toward the centre of Staleyville.

When I reached the gate I brought the car in past the startled old guard in his grey uniform, and stopped at the two-story, red-brick office building. The rivveted steel front door was locked. I rang the bell. A slit in the steel door opened and a guard showed his eyes. He unlocked the door. I asked for the office manager and was told he was upstairs.

Mr. Fulton Reece's office was a small, glass-partitioned cubicle. His desk was cluttered with papers. His face was unusually red and perspiring. His suit was untidy, his shirt collar soiled. His eyes were abnormal, pupils enlarged, the movement constantly shifting.

"I'm very much upset about Manette Venus," he was saying. "I was looking at her employment record a little while ago. It's surprising how little we knew of her, poor child."

"Could I see the employment record, sir?"

"Of course. Sit down, won't you?" He pushed down a lever on his sound box, and spoke into it. He looked up at me. "They'll send her folder right up."

I sat down in a brown leather chair. I said, "Do you have a Cole Boothbay working here?"

"Yes," Reece said. "He's been with us over a year. Very good man. Efficient, industrious and the type who simply radiates self-confidence."

"Do you know anything of his personal life, sir?"

"Nothing."

"I thought perhaps Mr. Boothbay might have told you things."

"Hardly. There'd be no occasion."

"And that goes for Manette Venus, too?"

"Naturally. Neither my wife nor I knew anything of her personal life."

A girl came into the office, carrying a Manila folder in her hand. She moved by me in a flurry of lilac scent and handed the folder to Reece. She went out. Reece opened Manette Venus' folder and turned it around to me.

There were two pages. I read them rapidly. "It's not much, Mr. Reece."

"I told you it wasn't."

"She gives a reference here," I said. "The reference is the Arjan Electric Supply in Chicago. This letter from them says she worked there three years ago under the name of Margaret Fleer. What kind of a reference is that, sir?"

Reece's hands twitched nervously. "I know the change of names bothers you. But it's really not so involved. At the time she was working in Chicago she was married. Her married name was Fleer. When she obtained her divorce two years ago, she reverted to her maiden name of Venus."

"Married?" I asked in a harsh voice.

"Yes, Mr. Lindsey, married. Her age on the record is twenty-one. She was married at eighteen and divorced at nineteen."

"Didn't you ever see her social security card?"

"No. She said she lost it. But the number is down here," he said eagerly. "She remembered the number."

"This working reference is three years old, sir," I said insistently. "She must have worked since then. Did she mention Cleveland?"

"Not to me. Perhaps she was collecting alimony during that time."

"These references are too vague," I said. "A firm as large as this—"

"I'm trying to get organised," Reece said helplessly. "I can't get nearly enough skilled office helpers. I've even advertised in the Boston and Worcester papers."

"But not in the Chicago papers. It seems queer that Manette Venus would come halfway across the country to work in Danford, Massachusetts. She didn't know a soul here. Thanks, anyway, sir," I said. "Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to talk to Cole Boothbay."

"Of course. He's out in our main office behind the counter. I'll introduce you to him."

We went into the main office. To the right was a large wire cage. Behind the grille a number of girls were busily taking packets of bills out of white canvas bags. Others were sorting coins swiftly and expertly.

"That's the payroll," Reece said. "It just came in."

"Did Manette Venus work in Payroll?" I asked.

"No. She worked in Accounts. I'd like to ask you something professional, Lindsey. How do you like our security here?"

"It looks good."

"I set it up myself," Reece said, his face beaming. "The only entrance to the building is the downstairs door. We keep it locked and guarded. We have a fire door in back of each floor. The one here leads to the fire escape. The doors are kept locked from the inside at all times. We're always care-

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just get off or something. Jess, I—"

Jess leaned heavily against the doorway. He began to feel a violent, shaking panic, worse than he'd felt under shellfire.

"What you follerin' me for, Janie?"

"Jess! Oh, my darling!"

She came towards him, and his panic mounted as she approached, clutching the backs of the seats against the starting jerks of the train. He knew if she touched him he would hit her, but he could not move away.

"You shouldn't-a been ashamed, Jess. Running off like this."

Jess stared at her in blind terror. He thought, I won't never get away. This kind of thing don't happen to a guy, there ain't nothing will ever make her leave me be. . . .

He turned and shot through the door back onto the platform. The train moved slowly, as it always did until it crossed the bridge over Top River Gap. Jess moved fast but he saw clearly and knew what he was doing. He waited until they crossed the culvert north of Beecher's Crossing, and when the train slowed almost to a stop before taking the curve, he jumped.

He could hear Janie's voice screeching behind him, so he got up at once and began to run, so she couldn't tell them somebody had jumped off and been hurt, and make them stop the train.

They might do it anyway, but even Janie wouldn't be let off in the middle of a bog, so they probably wouldn't until they reached Hampton Crossing, the other side of the Gap. That gave him a little time but not much.

He got a ride at the crossing quicker than he had hoped, and less than half an hour after he had slipped from the waiting-room onto the train he was in his own room behind Corley's garage.

His mind was a roiling mixture of anger, fear, and even grief, but he knew exactly what he was doing and did it with speed. He pushed the few clothes that he owned into his army foot-locker. He dug the jar from the corner by the wash-stand, emptied it and counted the money. Nearly three hundred dollars. F'ny, when he had started putting it in there he had a vague kind of idea that it might come in handy if he decided to get married or anything.

Oh well, he thought, no use to start thinking or trying to figure J st get away, that was the thing. But he couldn't help thinking about the way he'd felt when he came back from the war, figuring he could take his time, take his time about every single thing and there wouldn't be nobody to push him around. Felt figured he'd travel, maybe three-four jobs to see how he liked them.

CORLEY was all right. He'd figured to work for him for a while, and then, maybe by apprenticing with Dutch Fenstermacher, because he used to like working with wood when he was a kid. And take the girls out some'mes on a Saturday, and leave them be when he wanted to, and go camping along Top River weeks at a time if he wanted to, and maybe after a while when he'd got enough of that loose feeling, that wonderful feeling of nobody pushing you, nobody telling you, maybe he'd get married and maybe have a couple of kids.

And now there was nothing at all but to get away, get away as far and as fast as he could.

It took him only a few minutes to move everything he owned from the room and all of it, even the box, went into the foot-locker and the canvas bag. He dragged them out and shoved them into the back of his car, looking around as he did so, realising that anyone seeing him would think he looked guilty.

He pulled over to the pump and filled the tank, carefully left the exact change for the eight gallons on Corley's desk, and then pulled out. No use to tell anybody, no use to explain. Leave them think what they'd a mind to, they would anyhow. Just go, get out, get as far away as he could and never, never come back.

His face twisted with anger and bewilderment, and his eyes were filled with tears. He had never given his feelings about Two River Junction any thought. He had not had to. It was home, that was all. He had left it only when compelled to join the Army, and his whole time away had been filled with a dull homesickness.

When he listened to the other fellows talk about what they'd do when they got out of the Army and where they'd go, he had heard them with pity and wonder. For in his own mind there had been no question. He would go home.

He drove up River Street toward the brick-yard, painfully conscious of everything he passed, knowing that he was seeing it for the last time. As he rounded the curve in the road beyond the brick-yard, and Pappy Wiecomber's house came into view, swimming dimly out of the mist, he suddenly slowed down and brought the car to a stop, the motor still running.

He just looked at the place, that was all. He didn't have any feelings about that writing woman. None of this was her fault, any more than if she'd tripped over a string that set off a bomb that was all ready to pop anyway. Janie must have been off her nut already, only it didn't show, and looking at it one way, he could figure he was lucky this book had set it off before he married her.

While he looked he realised the front door had opened and that woman, that Faith Goodbind, had come out of it and now walked down the road toward him. Instinctively he started to pull off, but he did not. He didn't move. She came on slowly, and as she approached she glanced at the car, then at him, right into his face.

For a moment they stared at each other. All the pain and confusion that had been building up within him for weeks were in his look. But as she looked at him he got a very funny feeling. Well, he thought, it was as if she was the one that had had her props knocked out from under her—as if she was the one that had got hit by the explosion, not him.

For a moment he thought she was going to say something, to ask a question—he almost wished she would. But the moment passed. He looked away from her and up the road again, and set the car in motion. Out of the corner of his eye he saw that she, too, had turned away and started towards town.

Beyond Archer's place he turned into Hill Road. That was where the road began to lift away from the valley, the look of the landscape to change. That was the last of Two River, now lost to him forever. The mists of Two River closed behind him and the sun, as he chugged slowly to the top of Tamarack Mountain, lifted free of mist and took on a harsh and blinding brilliance.

. . . . . .

Faith had reached the spot where she had to decide: Would she walk through the street or the alley?

This had always been a thinking decision; now it held terror. Since she had stood in her yard and stared back at the boy in the old car who had stared at her, her vague emotions, her sensations of unease had crystallised into fear. For this reason she knew that there was no choice today. She must walk through the street. The Thing, the Terror, had to be faced.

Stop it, she thought; there's nothing. Nothing at all. People who live alone are supposed to go queer eventually and maybe that's what's happening to me.

Yet when she turned off the dirt lane that paralleled the road outside the town limits and stepped onto the scrubbed brick sidewalk that marked the beginning of the main street, she was tense and wary.

As if each curtained window hid an enemy, she thought, scoffing at herself.

I am getting queer, she thought again. There is n thing, nothin at all. . .

AT the place where the street began to curve downhill towards the river, there stood a brown, gabled house with a brass plate beside the front door saying it was a funeral home. Here a heavy woman in black clothes was scrubbing the front steps. She stood suddenly upright as Faith approached, and placed herself in the middle of the pavement.

Faith's heartbeat quickened. This is it, she thought. Whatever it is, now I'll find out. . . For all the enmity that she had told herself was imaginary seemed concentrated in the woman's face, and she began to tremble visibly as Faith approached.

"You could-a minded your own business!" She thrust her face forward and spoke in a piercing whisper. "Lem didn't know nothing about it. And he wouldn't-a had to. And we'd-a had it then, for when we're old."

Faith stared. Go on, she thought. Don't stop. . . . Now I'll know.

But the woman seemed to collapse as suddenly as she had loomed in the pathway, as if the emotion that had held her stiff and trembling had drained out of her. She looked over her shoulder toward the house and then, after giving Faith [illegible] wilderment and hatred, sh dropped again to her knees and [illegible] her scrubbing brush.

Faith stood where she was. First the boy in the car and now this woman, looking at her as if—as if what? What is it, oh, what is it? she thought, but she could not ask. After a time she made herself go forward again, but slowly, slowly . . .

Two River's women, performing the endless chores of scrubbing front steps already clean, lifting leaves which had fallen on immaculate dooryards, stopped at her approach and stared. In the middle of the block between Hill and Lunadilla streets, one woman walled until Faith was almost upon her; then, with a stony glance, swept aside her scrubbing pail with a gesture that suggested a drawing aside of skirts, and stalked into her house, slamming the front door behind her.

Faith felt a flicker of amusement at the realisation that this was the first time she had ever seen a woman in Two River Junction use her own front door; and with a scrubbing pail, at that. . .

The amusement was brief. Again she was laden with the sensation of pushing her way through a wall of enmity, and kept on asking herself: What has happened? What is it? What have I done?

Could it have anything to do with Ames? She had no illusions about what the town might think of their

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she's buying herself a little protection in you. The sweet, refined girl carries a gun. She says your life is in danger, too, but she don't say why. She thinks a man is watching her from a parked car on Glen Road and she almost throws a fit. Finally, she says she's going to come clean with you. But before she has the chance she's killed. And that, my boy, is only the beginning."

He unzipped his leather case and brought out a blue perforated teletype message. "Here's a TT from the Chicago police. The girl's got still another name. Her maiden name was Margaret Venable, not Venus."

"Go on," I said, my voice clogging in my throat.

"I have more," Newpole said. "The girl was married at eighteen to a man named Andrew Fleer. Fleer was twenty-five. A year after they were married, Fleer was convicted of attempted blackmail and got from one to three. Manette, or Margaret, was indicted on the same charge. But she skipped her bail. She went to Juarez, Mexico, and got a quickie divorce from Fleer. Then they lost her trail. The Chicago cops are still looking for her."

"It doesn't add up," I said.

"Fats is a positive identification, Ralph. There's no mistake. Fleer served his year, did his parole stretch and disappeared from Illinois."

"You said attempted blackmail. What was it?"

"One of the oldest touches in the world. The badger game. The girl meets an older, married man and invites him to her room. Just when they get comfortable, her husband comes busting in. The older man don't want any scandal. So he pays off."

Newpole scratched his toes. "But this time the Fleers had an old duffer who didn't scare. He promised to pay off the next day. When Manette and Fleer went to the meeting place, cops were staked out there. They grabbed the Fleers."

"Did they have a previous record?"

"Not the girl. Andrew Fleer was a smalltime grafter. He'd been in a few shenanigans, but managed to stay out of jail. I said they were from Chicago. But they weren't, not originally. They came from the cornbelt. Some small college town in Iowa called Ames. Fleer was a student there studying under the G.I. bill. Manette was living with an old aunt. The aunt died. Manette—we should call her Margaret — married Fleer and left town. She had no kin. That's her life, kid. It's not sweet and refined, is it?"

"No," I said. I took my pipe from the desk and began to fill it with uncertain fingers. There was a rap on the door. Newpole slipped into his shoes, got up and opened it. Lieutenant Chet Granger came into the room.

He smiled diffidently. "Everybody gets in early except me."

"Well?" Newpole asked him. "How are you coming along with the Reeces?"

Granger put a stick of gum in his mouth. "This Fulton Reece might not have any money, but he's old family and still belongs to the best clubs. There's one called the Danford Pioneers and they have a dinner once a month. The Reeces were there last night and they've got top witnesses to prove it."

"So?" Newpole said.

"So I went down to Danford Police Headquarters to see if they had a record on Reece. Not that I expected to find anything. He came from a prominent family and nobody in Danford would put him on record anyway. I didn't find anything, so I started to ask around. You know, shooting the breeze with some of the old-time cops. I did find something. There was an old-timer who did a little talking. Leo Nason. He told me he made a pinch about 1902. He put the pinch on Fulton Reece. Reece was ten or twelve years old then. Reece had killed a horse."

"A horse?" Newpole asked.

"Not really a horse. A Shetland pony. This Reece was living in a big house in town then. Next door was another big house and a girl lived there about Reece's age. The girl owned a pony and a cart, and Fulton was jealous. And little girls being little girls, she gave Fulton a bad time over it. So one night Reece sneaked over there with a big butcher knife and slit the girl's pony from ear to ear.

"The girl called the cops and Leo Nason came. The whole thing was hushed up quick. The Reece family paid for the pony."

"Well," Newpole said, putting his pipe down, "the guy's a character."

"Here's more," Granger said. "This afternoon I hung around the gate at Staley Woollen. When Reece came out at five I tailed him. He drove out to a plush roadhouse on the pike called Conti's. There, in a corner of the foyer, he meets a platinum blonde chick. She don't look more than sixteen. He stays with her a few minutes. Doesn't even buy a cup of coffee. He leaves her and goes out. I followed him home." His teeth masticated the gum. "I don't know what to make of it, Ed. A sloppy old man like him doesn't go together with a platinum blonde."

Newpole stood up. "We'll work tonight," he said.

I started to put my report away. Newpole said, "Not you, Ralph. You get some sleep. Check with me the first thing in the morning."

EARLY next morning I went to Ed Newpole's room. Chet Granger was with him.

"We got in only a couple of hours ago," Newpole said. He pointed to a large Manila envelope on the chair. "There's the evidence on the Venus case. Chet is bringing it into Boston. Meanwhile, we've got a job for you. We were at the Regal Hotel last night. Helen Toledo has a regular visitor there. A man named Al Yekiti. Ever hear of him?"

I shook my head.

"This Yekiti is a torpedo with a record as long as your arm. Mostly armed robbery, assaults, stick-ups."

Granger said: "We sent Al away a couple of times."

Newpole said, "The man is bad. I mean, nasty bad. In a hold-up he'll take the victim's money, then beat him up, break his teeth, even if there's no resistance. The man is vicious. No conscience, nothing. Just senseless meanness. He serves his time and comes out again. One thing about him. When he comes out of the pen, he doesn't wait long before he pulls another job."

Newpole buttoned his shirt. "So now we may have a tie-in between Helen Toledo, Al Yekiti, and Manette Venus. We know the Venus girl has worked the badger game." He cocked his head at me. "Did you ever think Manette was ready to make a proposition to you?"

"I've thought of it," I said.

"Seems like a perfect set-up to me," Newpole said. "I imagine she could get one of these old farmers out to some tourist cabin. Then a uniformed state trooper walks in on them. That would scare any man to death. He'd pay any amount of money."

He turned and looked at me. I was staring morosely at the floor.

"Disillusioned, huh?" he said. "Sure, she looked like a sweet, innocent kid. But I'll show you pictures of the nicest looking criminals you ever saw. Anyway, we've checked on Helen Toledo. She ain't as bad as Manette Venus. Her record shows disorderly conduct, drunk and disorderly, nothing much."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to tail Yekiti," Newpole said. "I'll give you his address and his car registration number. Watch what he does, where he goes. If you see him carrying anything suspicious, anything that looks like a weapon, shake him down. Otherwise leave him alone."

. . . . . .

In front of the ramshackle boardinghouse there was a black sedan. One window had a cracked glass held together by adhesive tape. The upholstery was soiled and grease-stained. I stood in an alley between two stores watching the house and the car.

I waited. A delivery truck went by, milk cases rattling. A Danford police car came slowly by, the two patrolmen lolling in the front seat. Then the front door of the rooming house opened.

I stood there rigid and motionless as Al Yekiti shuffled down the stairs. He wore a blue windbreaker and no hat. He was a huge, hulking man, with a hairy, unclean skin.

He got into his car and started off. I sprinted for the black cruiser. I slid in and turned out after him.

Yekiti drove uptown, through the traffic of Main Street and three blocks over. He parked the car in front of the Starlight Cafe. I drove by swiftly, turned the corner and stepped out. Yekiti was gone. I walked down the block and crossed the street. There was a small cafe with fly-specked window and fly-specked signs. I went inside, sat down at the counter near the window and ordered coffee.

I could see into the Starlight Cafe and I saw Yekiti sit down in the corner booth. Two other men joined him. They were young, with hard, vicious faces and long, unkempt hair. Helen Toledo moved into view. She was carrying three drinks and she bent over Yekiti and patted his head.

I watched Yekiti whispering, poking out a large finger at the men for emphasis. He grabbed his glass and gulped his drink. I stood up, threw a dime down, and sauntered out.

Al Yekiti came out of the Starlight Cafe. In his hand I saw a brown paper package. It was cylindrical, about fifteen inches long and four inches in diameter.

Yekiti went for his car. I moved fast to my cruiser and followed Yekiti back to his rooming house. He parked his car at the kerb, took his package, and went inside. I pulled up behind him and ran up to the door. I opened it.

I could hear Yekiti's heavy tread on the stairs above me. I went up on my toes, swiftly. I caught him at the door of his room.

He turned fast. His big awkward appearance had been deceiving. He was lithe and quick. But before he had swung halfway around, I was on him. I grabbed him by the back of his collar and yanked the windbreaker down hard. It threw him off balance. He dropped the package.

"What's this?" he grunted. He lurched into me, hitting me hard with his shoulder.

"State Police," I said. I grabbed his arm.

"You crazy nut," he rumbled. "Who think you're kidding?" His fist came up with swift force, sideswiping my mouth, glancing off. I bore in again, twisting one arm up behind his back, pinning the other with my body.

I heard the downstairs front door open and a figure came up the stairs towards us. I let go of Yekiti and moved away, backtracking. I reached for my hip holster and brought out the gun.

Yekiti, moving for me, stopped and

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knowledge. Back in the beginning, just this much might have prevented all that had happened.

"He's been dead for several years," Amos said.

Another crumb, quickly pecked up.

"Why'd she hafta come here for?" Again Rosa's bitterness burst forth.

"She came because a real-estate agent told her about the house. She could afford it. And she—" Again he stared down into his glass, and his own voice was bitter. "She loved Two River."

Rosa, now silent, continued to stand over him but he did not look at her again. She said nothing more. At last she turned and moved slowly away into the kitchen.

He stood at the bar, trying to think. He knew that he could no longer stay away from the table at which Faith and Eve sat, and he tried desperately to plan. Everything he said and did must be exactly right.

Slowly he emptied his glass and slowly turned to walk through the dining-room toward the table where she sat.

"Hello, Eve," he said. And then, "Faith—"

Eve said, "Sit down, Amos. We're drinking almost the last of Papa's brandy. I consider it a highly symbolic act."

He sat down and thought that perhaps Eve was feeling the brandy a little, but with the grace that never deserted her. He was glad she was here and thought she might somehow help him.

Rosa brought a glass for him and he let Eve fill it, watching her with the affection grown out of long knowledge, years of memories.

He thought of his first memory of Eve. She had seemed the essence of grown-up femininity: a vision in layers of sheer white with a large white hat, immaculate white stockings and white kid shoes. . . .

He had loved her violently then and for years afterwards. And even after that there had existed between them always a warm and tender friendship.

Now he swirled the brandy around in his glass, and took a sip. He turned to Faith.

"I'm glad you and Eve have met," he said. "Eve was the first grand passion in my life. I've never recovered completely."

"Amos!" Eve smiled and laid an affectionate hand across his. Again Amos thought, Faith has nothing like this — no old affections, no ancient ties, forgotten until they pull you back. There'll be none of this to help me hold her.

Again he felt desperation, and with it pity so great that it seemed to pour from him.

"Faith—" he said, and stopped, and for a moment could only look at her. Then he said, "Don't ever do it again, Faith."

She looked a question at him and he said, "Stand behind a closed door without answering. That was—don't do it again."

"I'm sorry." But she looked at him only for a moment and there was no intimacy in her look. Her eyes moved constantly as if in search of a way out of a trap.

Presently she said, "Eve has told me. I knew now what I've done."

Eve exclaimed, "Oh, my dear! Not you! You've done nothing at all!"

If Faith heard she gave no indication. Amos watched her for a moment and then said sharply, "Faith! You're being foolish. Two River has got itself in a stew. It's happened before. It's lived through scandals before, and crises and calamities and whatever else has come along."

He stopped, for Faith, her face closed against him, had turned towards a sound at the entrance of the dining-room. But he felt he had to press his point now, now before she got away again.

"You said you wanted to stay here. That's what staying in one place means. Can't you see—"

But he had to stop, for now the sound became a noise and then a turmoil. Rising above the attendant noises, with the clarity of a calliope, was the the voice of Roxie Drumheller.

"Turn me a-louse. Leave go of me, Luce Parker."

Amos stared incredulously, as others were staring. Rarely ever did Roxie leave the establishment she was pleased to call a "Club." Yet here she undoubtedly was, storming and raging, while Lucius Parker vainly tried to restrain her.

She looked around until she saw the table in the corner. Then, disheveled, glowing with rage, she charged. Luce Parker in her wake.

"Roxie!" He raised a voice obviously impotent against the flame of Roxie's fury.

"Shut up!" She barely paused to yell it over her shoulder. "Payin' you year in and year out to keep me out-a any kind-a trouble!"

"That's what I'm trying—"

"Then why did you let her say my rooms are dirty?"

WITH that, Roxie descended upon Faith, ignoring Eve and Amos. Knocking glasses and ash trays aside, she leaned forward until her face was within inches of Faith's.

"Ain't never even seen my place. But my rooms are dirty, are they?"

She reached over the table and caught Faith under the armpits and, before Amos or Lucius could move to prevent it, dragged her across the table, sending what glassware remained on it crashing to the floor.

Amos struggled to get from behind the table but before he could untangle himself Faith shook herself free. And then Amos stopped. For he saw Faith's face and thought suddenly: She can manage! She's not walking out, not on this!

"Don't touch me again," Faith said gently. But there was something in her voice that made Roxie pause. Only for a moment however; then she started forward again.

Faith's hand flew upward so quickly Amos scarcely saw it, but the slap sounded across the dining-room and almost at once the mark from it reddened along the flawless skin of Roxie's cheek.

Roxie stopped and stared, bewilderment slackening her features. Her Club was her world and in that world no one argued with Roxie. Amos, almost laughing with the joy that began to surge up in him, thought, Roxie can hand it out but she can't take it! Faith's got her cornered!

Roxie looked around her. Rosa stared in from the bar, and Janie Haiser's white, excited face looked out from the kitchen door. Two faces showed at the street door, and the window of the dining-room wore a fringe of them.

Now Roxie began to look trapped. She had always stayed out of town. Nobody could say she made a show of herself or her business. People who wanted to see Roxie could go out and find her.

The first roaring flame of her rage burned out. She now looked worried. But not completely finished.

"You wrote that story, didn't you?" she demanded.

"I wrote a story," Faith said. "But the only dirty rooms in it were in a disreputable house."

"Whadda-ya mean? I run a club! Lucius—" She turned raging to her lawyer, who now leaned casually against one of the booths and looked on with open amusement. "Lucius—you can't let nobody call my place—"

"Who called it anything, Roxie?"

"She—" Roxie raised a pointing finger, her arm outstretched. Then, in mid-gesture, she slowly let the arm fall.

"They — they all told me she meant my place."

"Who told you that, Roxie?"

Roxie looked about at the staring ring of faces and especially at Rosa's face, avid with interest and triumph. Oh, Rosa Silvernail would be glad not to miss this, all right. Caution reasserted itself.

"Lucius," she said at last. "I'd like to come up to your office a minute."

She bore her magnificent body with as much poise as ever as she swept ahead of Lucius; but there was an uncertainty in her face so rare in Roxie that it indicated utter defeat.

For a long moment after the door had closed behind them there was silence. Then Rosa stared at Faith, who still stood where she had faced Roxie, and said with grudging wonder: "Well! First time I ever seen Roxie Drumheller faced down."

. . . . . .

When Stafford pulled around the curve of mountain to the spot where Two River Junction was revealed below him, he brought the car to a stop and looked down. He said nothing and was grateful that Hampton also was silent.

He stopped for the moment any effort to define his emotions, for he found them confusing. They were connected with Faith; that much he reluctantly admitted. But they had something to do with the town itself.

You have been listening, he thought, to too many of Hamp's broadcasts. Delightful vignettes created by the master hand with intent to charm.

But he knew it was not all Hampton. From the first, the place had had an effect on him, not altogether pleasant, yet always compelling.

He saw the town more clearly now than he had seen it before, for he had, on his other trip, arrived at night and left before the mist had completely lifted. Now it lay beneath him, sparkling in the winter sunlight, and he recognised — or thought he did — part of its fascination for him.

Everything of life was here, he thought; all the living and dying and loving and getting born that made up life in New York or London or Paris or Calcutta; but rendered exquisitely in miniature, even the most sordid detail surrounded by a golden fuzz of sunlit mist.

Everything he had left behind him in the city seemed blatant and overstated and a little shoddy. He thought of Faith Goodbind and of what her life in Two River must be like; then he began to think further in a manner that he felt to be foolish and even maudlin.

Hampton said dryly: "Don't let it hypnotise you, my boy. Old Kentucky Home and Hannibal, Missouri, and The Scenes of My Childhood — How dear to my heart, et cetera. All done up in a package with the Swanee River around it. Much too slick, believe me."

Stafford put his car into gear, said, "What are you talking about?" and started down the mountain towards Two River Junction.

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"No. But I'll send for something."

I smiled at her, picked up the telephone, and called room service.

Helen Toledo sank back in her chair. "Nice minie," she commented.

I said, "How's your friend, Al Yekiti?"

"How did you know Al's a friend of mine?"

"Simple. We asked Al. He told us."

"Al," she said, staring at me, her face perplexed. "Al's all right. He's a big ox and he ain't too smart, but—" She stopped suddenly and looked over at the desk, seeing the pencil and a sheet of hotel stationery. "You writing letters?" she asked coyly.

"I'm finished," I said. "What were you saying about Al?"

"Nothing. Who wants to talk about Al? You look more of a sport to me. You come to town much?"

"Often enough."

"They put you with the detectives, huh? You must be working on something big and special."

"Everything is special, Helen," I said.

There was a knock at the door and I went over and opened it. The bellboy brought in a tray of drinks.

She picked up her glass and said, "Here's luck."

She drank. She put her glass down on the table beside her. "You haven't been a cop long, have you?" she asked.

"Not long."

"You look like a sharp kid," she said. "Too sharp to be a cop. A real sharp kid can make a buck in this town."

"Yes," I said. "How sharp does he have to be?"

"He's got to know his way around. A trooper's pay don't go far these days. A guy's got to be interested enough to make a dollar on the outside. He wouldn't be hurting nobody."

I picked up my glass.

"I'm just making conversation, get me?" she said. "But if I find me the right guy, we could make some money together. It would be a safe, sure operation, fast and foolproof. In and out. One job and break clean."

"Who else is in on it?"

"You interested or curious?"

"I might be interested. Who else is in on it? Al Yekiti? Calvaris and Hornes?"

She smiled. "Don't be foolish, kid. Nobody shows their cards until you've paid to look. What kind of poker player are you, anyway?"

"I might want to get into the game."

"You'd have to show me, kid."

"How?"

"We got ways. They might want to test you first, get your feet wet. But once you're in, you're in. You can't turn around and walk away. Somebody else tried it." She drew her hand across her throat in a quick gesture. "That person ain't around any more."

"Manette Venus," I said slowly.

"Maybe," she said. "I warned her. I told her what was going to happen to her."

"You knew Manette Venus was going to be killed," I said softly.

"I didn't mention Manette Venus," she said smugly. "You did." Then she caught the expression on my face. "Say, what's the matter with you?"

"Manette Venus," I said. "The house on Glen Road. Ellen Levesque walked into something there. Manette Venus was already tagged."

She jumped up, overturning her glass. "Hey, look," she said, alarmed. "I was just kidding. A joke—"

"No," I said. "You were in on Manette's murder."

"Are you crazy?" she shouted. "I'm getting out of this booby hatch."

"Where are you going, Helen?"

"Away from you, Trooper."

"We'll go together," I said, slipping into my jacket. "I want you to see what a State Police barracks looks like."

"You're kidding," she said faintly, dry-mouthed. "Why, the whole thing was a big gag. Can't you take a joke, kid?"

"I like jokes," I said. "I can't stop from laughing over this one."

"Look," she said earnestly, "I've been level with you."

"No," I said. "You've lied about Manette Venus. The way you met her, everything. But tonight I was getting some of the truth. Come on."

"I'm not going with you to no barracks," she said, heading for the door.

I moved ahead of her and blocked it. "Then I'll have to make you go, Helen. I'm arresting you on suspicion of murder."

"But you don't understand," she said brokenly. "They see me come out with you and they'll kill me."

"There's somebody waiting outside?"

"No, no. I'm alone. Look, let me go. Give me a break."

"The same break you gave Manette Venus," I said. I motioned her to the door.

Her face was pasty and she seemed physically ill now. She went unsteadily to the door. "I'm as good as dead," she said dully. "Just as good as dead."

I opened the door and looked out into the hallway. It was empty. She came out and we went to the elevators. The elevator came up and the door opened. Helen Toledo was crying softly, the mascara coming down her cheeks.

WE came down to the lobby. I walked slightly behind her. Outside, on the sidewalk, I said, "The cruiser is at the corner."

She made a quick half-step as though to run. I grabbed her wrist. She started to walk to the corner. I was one step behind her, watching so that she would not dart away. Then I noticed a black sedan parked across the street. The car showed no lights. There was one man in the front sheat, two in the rear. The car had a broken window held together with adhesive tape, and I knew it was Al Yekiti's.

"Get back," I shouted to her. There was a shock of flame from the sedan and six rapid shots. I scrabbled for my gun, bringing it out from the hip holster. I ran forward and fired at the sedan. Behind me I heard Helen's high-pitched scream.

Now I could see the German machine pistol protruding from the window of the sedan. The machine pistol flashed and rattled again. I felt a hard wrenching blow hit my left arm. I lost my balance and fell down in the gutter. The gun dropped from my hand. There was a haze in front of my eyes as I fished for it. I found it. My fingers clutched the butt.

I got to one knee, then the other. I stood up, my left arm useless and dangling. I stumbled in the direction of the car. I lifted the revolver and fired once again. The black car roared away.

There was a babble of shrill voices from every direction. I heard the sound of a police whistle, then the high-pitched sound of a siren. I was looking for Helen Toledo.

I found her. She was down on the sidewalk, limp and shapeless like a large, oversized rag doll, her handbag open, the contents scattered near her. Wide-eyed whispering bystanders hovered over her. I pushed through them. I bent down and lifted her head. I saw the darkly spreading blot on her pink coat. The crimson smear around her mouth was not lipstick. Helen Toledo was dead.

My arm was beginning to pain me badly. The Danford cops were arriving, filtering through the crowd and clearing the street. A street sergeant came through, bawling orders, police cars stopped with squealing brakes. A uniformed lieutenant came up to me.

"You the trooper?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. I was suddenly giddy, weak and light-headed. I sagged into him. He held me up, peered forward and saw my sleeve.

"You've been hit," he said. He ripped my coat sleeve to the shoulder. "How bad is it?"

"I don't know," I said vaguely.

"We'll get you to the hospital," he said.

"Wait a minute," I said hoarsely. "It was three men in a black sedan. Al Yekiti and two others." I gave him the registration number. "Call my barracks and have them get out roadblocks."

"Sure," the lieutenant said. "Sure. They won't get far."

. . . . . .

They had me in a private room at the Danford General Hospital. I was sitting in a chair near the screened open window. My left arm was on a board splint, bandaged to the fingertips, and carried in a shoulder sling. I heard footsteps in the hallway. I turned around. Coming into the room was my father in his wheel-chair, my mother behind it, pushing. My mother came up to me a little breathlessly.

"How do you feel, Ralph?" she asked worriedly.

"I'm fine, Ma," I said.

"You look pale and thin," my father said. "You lost some blood, didn't you?"

"I'm all right now," I said. "They operated on me last night. They sewed me up nicely. I'll be leaving here tomorrow."

"They got clean away, didn't they?"

"So far, yes."

"Millie," my father said softly. "I want to talk to Ralph alone. You understand—"

Her eyes were moist. "Yes," she said. "I'll go speak to his doctor."

She went out. My father wheeled over to the window. His face was haggard.

"So," he said heavily, "it looks like I've caused all this. I started it. I let Ellen come to Danford."

"It happened," I said. "How were you to know?"

"I spoke to the Levesques," he said thinly. "I offered anything. I spoke to the Commissioner at G.H.Q. I called the D.A. here. What could they do for me, Ralph? They said the evidence—"

"Don't believe all the evidence," I said. "We're working on it. There are some new angles—"

He took a deep breath. "We'll have to do something about Ellen. When you see a kid like Ellen grow up next door to you, and she's in your house all the time, she's like your own daughter."

"We'll get her out," I said.

"Does she mean enough to you? I mean, there's no more foolishness about it, is there?"

"No," I said. "I'm cured. And I'll get her out."

My father smiled wanly. "I came here to cheer you, and it's the other way around."

. . . . . .

Detective-Lieutenant Ed Newpole came in the next day. I was in my own clothes then and getting ready to leave.

"They said you were being discharged," Newpole said. "But I thought it was later this afternoon."

"I want to go back to duty, Lieutenant. Right now."

Newpole took off his battered hat and scratched his head. "Well, I don't know if you're fit yet—"

"The surgeon-general was here this morning. He said I was able to do light duty. I'm fit. And there are three gunmen on the loose."

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She must not do that. Stop, she thought, force it out of your mind, think of anything at all. . . .

There was the house. It didn't matter really, she knew that. She knew a house was a shell, its contents ephemeral, all of it vulnerable to destruction in a moment by fire, storm, even in a longer moment by decay. . . . Yet she could not have left it to Pearl, that was one thing she could not do.

Thank goodness, there had been Amos. He would remember. Without her having to tell him anything, he had understood. He had not discussed the price at all. He had not tried, as others in Two River might have done, to get it for less, nor had he (and for this she was even more grateful) tried to pay her more. He had asked no questions when she said the only thing she wanted was that Pearl Miller should never have it, nor anyone who might sell it to Pearl Miller. But he would remember.

At the end he had grinned wryly at her and said, "The first investment I've ever made I'm sure Dad would have approved of. Eve, it makes me feel conservative and solid."

EVEN now (Oh, don't think of it, don't let yourself think of it!) if Pearl had got the house when first she had asked for it, Jonathan would be there, in the downstairs parlor . . . at the place where the velvet draperies had covered the doorway to the library . . . and Pearl would be there, hovering, heavy as putty, her childhood's avidity for disaster gleaming through the professional dolor of her face.

Oh, thought Eve, stop, please stop! she pushed her face, eyes closed, against the train window. . . . Oh, Jonathan, she thought, you could have taken me. I should have guessed when I saw the skates but I didn't or I'd have come too . . . It would have been good, flying down the ice again, just the two of us. . . . If we had been together we wouldn't have known at all when the ice cracked beneath us . . . it would have been quick. . . .

For a moment she was lifted away, was flying with the clear, soaring freedom of movement on the ice. . . . Then she returned to the heaviness of her body, the grime of the train which now began to jerk itself into motion. No one else had got on. She was dully grateful for that. It would give her a little time to herself before she would have to face other travellers and eventually, Vronnie.

Vronnie would be decent; she always had been. She wouldn't condescend, for Eve knew she was extremely glad to have her. It was almost impossible to get anyone these days to do the exquisite hand-work Vronnie's customers had come to expect, upon which the reputation of her shop was partially built.

There were, Eve thought dryly, a few advantages in being an anachronism. For generations no one had been taught to sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam; no one but Eve. Now (how shocked, how disgusted Papa would be!) she would earn her living by it.

But even Vronnie would not be able to help thinking, The wages of sin. . .

What a good text I would make for someone, Eve thought, knowing how completely her face had lost its illusion of youth, how deeply now the lines were etched . . . And she would fit the text, for she was being punished—but not for what they thought. Not for loving Jonathan. If her life had held any purpose at all, it had been to be there when Jonathan had needed her. . . . More possibly because of her life with Papa — indolent, without purpose except to please.

Yet if she had lived otherwise she would not have been there when Jonathan came down to the river, fastening her skates in the blue dusk when other women were bustling about their kitchens. . . .

No. If she had sinned it was the sin of being without courage. I made a lovely pattern, she thought bitterly; it hypnotised even me. Papa's charming daughter in Papa's charming house. . . . always gentle and lovely for Jonathan. . . . It would have been sordid, going away with him, living in ugly little rooms, being turned away from good places. . . .

I hadn't the courage to be sordid . . . I hadn't even the courage to stay, with dignity, in Two River and face the stares, the memory of Pearl Miller in the doorway.

This was her sin and for this she would be punished all the days of her life. . . .

The train whistle shrieked out the warning that it was approaching the bridge over Top River Gap. Eve did not open her eyes, but she felt Two River Junction slip forever behind her.

Jonathan, Jonathan, good-bye . . . oh, Jonathan! . . . . . .

Pearl cowered in her chair behind the table. Her fancy-work bag was clutched in her lap. Lem hadn't found it! He hadn't once thought of looking there — as if she'd of kept it any place else! As if she could have borne to have it any place except right here, where every time she put her hand in for a ball of thread or her bobbin, she could touch it, stroke it with her fingers. . . .

But he had — he had the account books! Her own account books! And the look on his face was — it was like Eve had looked at her, as if she was—as if she wasn't human at all but something — something nasty. Her heart pounded until its heavy beating seemed ready to break through the walls of her chest.

They hadn't no right looking at her like this . . . her own husband, and Evie Larch too . . . She clutched the bag in her lap, feeling cold sweat break out all over her body.

Lem said heavily, "That's how you done it."

"I dunno what you're talkin' about, Lem."

"Savin' me all that work — keepin' the accounts. And you got the money from Hoppy Smith . . . and from Jen Cornish, for her ma, when Jen ain't had money for a good meal in fifteen years. Other folks can help out where they're needed. Doc'd take care a Mrs. Cornish for ten years. Luce Parker c'd get that claim of Jen's settled. . . . But they don't get buried for nothin'. . . . No . . . They got to pay for that, even if they go without . . ."

He slammed the ledger shut and continued to stare at her fixedly, yet with revulsion.

"I ain't never liked this business, exactly," he said. "I never thought nobody went into it by choice. Kind of the way I did, I figured. Pa had it — and come time to settle down, seemed I just drifted 'til I had it. But I ain't never been shamed by it. Somebody had to do it and I done the best I could. Now I'm . . . shamed. I feel like — all these years, I—I been bleedin' folks too grieved to fight back."

Pearl protested in her mind but her voice would not come. They'd owed the money, all of 'em. And she hadn't pressed none of them. Just mentioned it, now and then . . . seemed like they'd wanted to pay, for fear she might think it was disrespectful to their loved ones if they didn't.

Not that she'd ever said such a thing, she wouldn't have dreamed up such a thing . . . Just mentioned it to them, two or three times . . . sometimes once was enough . . . It had been more of a favor to them than anything, hadn't it? Giving them a chance to pay a final respect. . . .

But against the look on Lem's face she could not protest. Now he said: "I don't know where you put it. I don't want-a. I hope I never see it. But I'll keep my own accounts from now on. And I'll get another assistant. And if any collectin' or receivin' of payments is done by anbody but me" —he stared at her and Pearl knew how deep the menace in his voice went— "you'll be out in the streets the next day with nothin' but the clothes to your back. And all that money you saved up for yourself. All that nice money."

He left the kitchen and Pearl trembled in her chair. He couldn't-a meant that — he never could! Paying out for an assistant when she hadn't cost him nothing . . . and getting in somebody strange to do her work . . . he couldn't!

Her chair rocked back and forth as if pushed by a spirit hand. She clutched the fancy-work bag, with its heavy treasure, to her chest, and her tears poured down upon it.

CHEERFULLY Lucius Parker attacked his Sunday morning sausages. May Anna, dressed for church, peeked at her food. She cast an occasional quick look at her husband but, except for that, stared down at the congealing mess of eggs and sausages upon her plate.

For days her husband [illegible] d been, for him, almost sprightly. Something amused him [illegible] perception of her husband's mental processes was dim, she knew enough to mistrust any situation that amused Lucius.

She was early for church but, after forcing upon herself a few sips of lukewarm coffee, she began to gather up her gloves and bag and prayerbook. Lucius leaned back in his chair, sighed with satisfaction, and looked at her.

"Looks as if there might be a law case in that Faith Goodbind business after all," he said casually.

"You mean — you mean somebody is going to sue her?"

"Oh, not her. Told you nobody'd have a case there. Only somebody wrote a letter to her publishers. Anonymous. That's not a Federal offence. But there might be a little libel in it."

With great effort May Anna continued to put on her gloves, carefully stroking down each finger. For a moment the old feeling flowed through her again — everybody noticing just her, talking for days of just her. Her heart pounded.

Then she knew it wouldn't be the way she'd planned. It would be—oh, horrible!

Lucius went on easily: "Fellow showed it to me. I'd say he had a case, all right, if they find out who wrote it."

But he shouldn't have done that! That wasn't the way she had planned it. She hadn't meant to keep it anonymous at all. She had purposely thrown out hints in the letter, so that of course they'd come right to her if they came at all. All they'd have had to do was show anybody in Two River the

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white envelope. He opened the flap. Inside were a dozen small envelopes. Granger opened one, dipped a finger inside and put the finger to his tongue. "Heroin," he said metallically.

Newpole turned to Dolly Pine. He said, "Would you open your handbag for us, Dolly?"

She giggled and opened her handbag. Newpole took out his pencil flashlight and shined it inside the bag.

"You carry quite a stock," he said.

"Business is good," she said.

Newpole put his hand out for the bag. She gave it to him. He went over to his sedan and opened the rear door. Dolly Pine stepped in and I got in front with Newpole.

. . . . . .

We were in the guardroom of the barracks. In a corner sat a tall, angular State policewoman. In the centre of the room, in a large chair, sat Dolly Pine. Captain Walsh was standing near the window. Newpole was walking back and forth in front of the big chair asking questions. He faced Dolly Pine and said, "And how long have you known Mr. Reece?"

"Oh, a couple of months," Dolly said.

Newpole brought out a picture of Manette Venus. "Did you ever see this girl?"

"No."

"But you've heard of her."

She bobbed her head. "Sure. I heard of her. Fultie—I mean, Mr. Reece—he mentioned her."

"How?"

"She lived in his house. She was murdered there."

"Is that all he said about her?"

"He said she was pretty, but he didn't like her."

"Why didn't he like her?"

She wrinkled her snub little nose. "He didn't want her around the house. But his old lady wanted a boarder and he couldn't say no to her."

"You think he and Manette had any trouble? Maybe he was mixed up in some deal and she found out about it."

She shrugged her shoulders. "Could be."

"Or maybe they were in the deal together and they had a fight about it."

"I don't know if Fultie would fight with her."

"He could have hired somebody else to get rid of her."

"I don't know. The old boy's a soft one. He wouldn't do nothing himself."

Newpole rubbed his jaw. "Where were you last Thursday night, the night Manette was killed?"

She shook her head. "I don't know. I don't remember. I was out somewhere."

"Did you ever hear of Al Yekiti?"

"Sure, the papers have been full of him."

"You know him well?"

"Him? That broken-down tramp? Naw. He never had two nickels to rub together. Too cheap to get on the habit."

"Did Fulton Reece know Yekiti?"

"I don't know. Fultie never mentioned him."

"You know Calvaris and Horace?"

"No. But I heard of them."

"You haven't seen any of them around the past few days?"

"Not since they knocked off Helen Toledo."

"You knew Helen?"

"Naw. I seen her working in the Starlight once."

Newpole took out his pipe and filled it slowly and methodically. "How long have you been selling drugs to Fulton Reece?"

"I told you before," she said. "A couple of months."

"How did he contact you? How did he know you were a drug pusher?"

She didn't answer.

Newpole said, "What was the idea of the celebration at Conti's tonight?"

"Oh, Fultie was complaining the price was too high."

"Where do you pick up your drugs, Dolly?"

She smiled up at him. "You shouldn't ask. It's naughty to ask."

"We've notified Treasury. They'll be coming down to talk to you."

"It won't do the Feds no good."

Newpole puffed on his pipe. "You've got quite a load of dope in you now, Dolly. When it wears off you won't be feeling so good. I think you'll be talking then."

"I'll worry then, Lieutenant."

"You're charged with possession and sale of narcotics."

"I'll worry when the time comes."

"We've put a high bail on you. Ten thousand. Can you raise it?"

"Not now, I can't."

"Then the policewoman will have to take you down to the women's detention in Danford. She'll take you into the dining-room first and get you a cup of coffee."

"Gee, thanks," Dolly Pine said. She stood up and patted her hair. "You guys are real gentlemen. You give service."

FULTON REECE was brought in, his suit wrinkled, his tie askew. Newpole said, "Sit down, please, Mr. Reece, and take off your coat."

Reece took off his coat and sat down heavily. Newpole said, "Let me see your arm, Mr. Reece." He pulled up the sleeve of Reece's shirt. The veins from the elbow to wrist were discolored and purple. There were needle marks. The back of the hand was puffed.

There were beads of sweat on Reece's forehead. He said, "What did the girl tell you, Lieutenant?"

"Everything, Mr. Reece."

"A very stupid child," Reece said, without emotion, his voice tired in defeat. "I don't know what possessed me to take up with her."

"Drugs," Newpole said. "If not her, it would have been someone else."

"I'm entirely at your mercy," Reece said tonelessly. His mouth quivered and his jaw went slack. "Entirely. The Reece name, everything, is entirely at your mercy."

"Would you want another cup of coffee, Mr. Reece?"

"Thank you. But the sergeant gave me some in the dining-room. I could use a white powder, of course."

"No, I'm sorry," Newpole said.

"If the girl told you everything, then what do you—?"

"Not about drugs," Newpole said. "We're interested in you and Manette Venus."

"I had nothing to do with her murder. I swear it."

"She was killed in your house."

"You think I—?" Reece shook his head. "But I didn't, Lieutenant. I didn't kill her. I was out with my wife that evening. I can prove we were at dinner at the Pioneer Club when Manette was killed. We came home and found her dead. We saw somebody run away."

"You had some kind of motive," Newpole said. "You didn't want Manette in the house. She found out you were taking drugs, didn't she?"

"Yes. But I wouldn't kill her because of it. You're making me sound like a hardened criminal. I'm not. I would never harm a living creature."

"You killed a Shetland pony when you were ten years old," Newpole said. "With a butcher knife."

"Oh," Reece said, saliva appearing at the edge of his mouth. "To go back all those years. It was more than fifty years ago."

Newpole said, "Mr. Reece, Manette found out you were using drugs. You were afraid she might tell your wife, or the Danford police. You might have hired somebody to kill Manette. Somebody like Al Yekiti, for example."

Reece looked around frantically at the impassive faces surrounding him. "I never met any Al Yekiti. I know he's a gangster who murderd a girl a few days ago."

"But you knew the girl he murdered. Her name was Helen Toledo."

"Yes," Reece said. "She came to the house once or twice to visit Miss Venus. I saw her at the Starlight Cafe twice afterwards."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was desperate. Dolly was charging me enormous prices for heroin. I tried to make another contact. Helen Toledo looked like she was in the proper element to do something for me. I gave her twenty-five dollars."

"And what did she do?"

"Nothing," he said jerkily. "She kept delaying it, promising. I never got my money back, either."

"You need help, Mr. Reece."

"What can anybody do for me?"

"There's the Federal Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky. Arrangements can be made."

"But what can you do for me now, sir?"

"We have to book you for possession, Mr. Reece. But the bail will be only five hundred dollars."

"My wife is ill. The shock of it—the scandal!"

"I'm sorry," Newpole said. "We have to go after the Dolly Pines and the big ones behind her. Through you we can do it. If you'll have somebody go bail for you, I'll call the bail commissioner now. After your bail is arranged you go home."

"I can't call anybody. I can't tell anybody."

"You have a family lawyer. That's what he's for."

"Very well," Reece whispered. "I'll give you his name. Please call him for me. It makes no difference anyway. Everything is over."

. . . . . .

I was shaving in my hotel room the next morning, Tuesday. Ed Newpole came in. He said, "I got a call from GHQ that the lab report on the Venus case is ready. Do you want to drive into Boston with me?"

I dropped the razor and began to wash off the lather. "When can we go?"

"Now," he said. "You're in a hurry, aren't you?"

"Like I've never been before."

"Sure, kid," he said. "But don't expect miracles. And let's stop for coffee first."

We drove along the wide, sinuous concrete ribbon that led to Boston. Newpole lit his pipe and puffed on it. He said, "Where's your pipe?"

"I'm afraid I'll chew the stem to bits," I said.

"No sense thinking too much about it," he said succinctly. "That way you're never too badly disappointed."

"I've had the breaks," I said. "It's not every boot trooper who gets a plain-clothes assignment like this. I'm grateful for it."

"Well, like I told you before, you knew the deceased and the suspect. We've done it in the past." He puffed methodically on his pipe. "Besides, I got a feeling in here for your old man. I was with him when he got shot."

We came into the mushrooming suburbs of Boston—Natick, Wellesley, then Newton and Brookline. We turned off at Brookline Village and drove across to Commonwealth Avenue.

The Department of Public Safety was at 1010 Commonwealth Avenue. It was a large, square, factory-type building

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that boarding-house madam for her Ma, it would-a flattered her."

Once Lucius had glanced at Stafford and given his dry grin.

"No different from New York, son," he had said. "Only there, I guess, you can move around the corner."

At the time Stafford had been annoyed at this implication of innocence on his part. Life in New York, after all—

Life in New York was something, he now admitted wryly, from which he could move around the corner. Or take a place in Connecticut. Or, if it flung itself at you, sudden and raw, as it sometimes did (the time the man had leaped from a roof and landed on the lawn of the terrace where he was having cocktails), you could turn away, you could call the right people and have it taken care of, and say protectively to your companion, Don't look, darling, it's nothing to do with you.

Of course, that was it. That was the difference. In Two River, nothing ever happened of which George Hauer or Amos Tucker might say, It's nothing to do with you. The sudden death, the sordid scandal, was never too far distant from your own life. In Two River Junction the bell never tolled for a stranger.

Well, he thought, as he shifted gears to take the second curve of the mountain road, it is all over and Hamp and I are getting out quite safe. Two knowledgeable strangers, wise in the ways of the world, and we are not bound by the curse, getting off scot-free. Whatever was in the back of our minds, we've escaped with no strings attached.

He wondered when and how the tradition that pictured the knowing city slicker as opposed to the innocent country bumpkin had arisen. He knew now that a feeling he had had that life in Two River resembled life in a mirror was right, but that he had been wrong in thinking that what he saw was the real thing seen in charming miniature.

It was, rather, the real thing rendered to a highly concentrated essence, overwhelming in its intensity compared to which life as he knew it in the city was a watered-down imitation.

He permitted himself, now, to think of Faith. The cottage was far behind him, and when the road turned at the top of this hill it would close from view the curious, isolated triangle of land that held Two River Junction. He was safe. He could think of her as much as he wished and admit, at last, that he might have loved her.

It had been a close call, and he had not got off untouched, for he could keep away from her entirely and there would still be Summer Brave, which was Faith herself, as much as the oval face and slender body.

When they reached the top of the mountain he turned the car into the small curve of parking space that had been worn out at the edge of the road by people who pulled off to admire the view. Silently he and Hampton looked back the way they had come.

There was little to see. Mist lay over Two River, protecting it from the sight of strangers, muffling even its sounds. The spire of the Congregational Church pushed through at one point and, more dimly, the weathercock of The Saddler's Inn.

It's her kind of place, Stafford thought. Whether she stays here or not, the place she finds will be like this. (If there is such another, which God forbid!) And it's not, he thought grimly, for the likes of me. I couldn't stand the pace.

Beside him, Hampton let out his breath in a long sound of relief and finality.

"Well. That will be one for the books for some time to come."

"Will it?" Stafford was curious. "Will you really use it?"

Hampton looked down at the gently shifting mist for some time. Then he said, "No."

Inside himself Stafford grinned. Good old Hamp! Hampton the charm-boy. He hadn't got out of it untouched either! Well, well, it's a small world, he thought cheerfully, and started the car and swung it into the road again.

Neither of them spoke as they set their faces towards the city. Shaken as they both had been, they raced eagerly towards it.

. . . . . .

Amos sat at his worktable and looked at the deed in his hand. Eve had given it to him the day before she left; Lucius had the other papers.

He thought now of Eve or, rather immersed himself completely in memories of Eve, all the old memories from the many years he had known her. Goodbye, Eve, ran through his mind still. They had smiled when she left and he had held her hand for a moment, the affection of years warm between them.

More than affection, he now thought. Every man who knew Eve must have been a little in love with her. She was a distillation of all that was feminine: gentle, complaisant, lovely; unattainable, yet warmly personal. The men were fortunate who had known Eve.

Tears had stung his eyelids as he had watched her move, with delicacy and grace, out of his cluttered workroom. Goodbye — goodbye, Eve — had run over and over through his mind after she had gone, as it did now. And knew that was goodbye to part of himself, part of his youth.

What would he do with her house, he wondered? It was impossible to imagine anyone except Eve herself living in it. If there were ghosts, then Eve's would forever occupy the upstairs sitting-room, hovering over the piano, touching the tea things with graceful ghostly hands, filling the rooms with the remembered scent of violets. . .

I could take Faith there, Amos thought. There we would both be alien, starting from the beginning. Eve's ghost would be kind to Faith. . .

He pushed himself away from the desk abruptly, as if forcibly pushing away the thought of Faith. He went to the window and looked down at the river.

There was nothing more he could do. Not even for Faith. Two people had to want a marriage. She knew that he wanted her, that he would do anything to keep her here, to make the situation bearable for her. It was impossible for him to know, even to guess, what she would do.

He felt that if she found Two River untenable and went away she would never find a home again, but would wander, always, as her father had done. And she was not like her father, he was certain of that.

He stared down at the ice-coated river, remembering her eager, happy face. This house is mine, she had said, and I can come back to it every single night! And, looking at the river, he thought of Jon Bricker, and again of Eve, and of the whole fantastic mess.

If Faith left, he could not see her. But he had been wrong before. He knew now that if she left he would follow her, though there would be little of happiness for either of them in that.

He heard footsteps on the stairs and half turned, listening. It sounded like a woman — but Eve was gone. It might be—

He turned fully and then stood motionless. It was Faith. He thought: I've planned our lives together, in several different versions, and I never heard her step on a stair before.

He neither moved nor spoke, but looked at her.

Once when he was twelve years old he had tried to tame a young fox. He had spent weeks leaving food for it; and slowly, gently trying to approach it, talking, coaxing. On the day when the fox had not fled at his approach but had turned, tensely wary, but waiting, he had stood as he did now, his breath stopped, not moving even a hand.

Faith said, "I—I've never been here. You said once you'd show me—"

"Of course."

He showed her the workroom; his drawing-boards and books of sketches; the pieces of furniture in the process of completion.

She said nothing, but ran her hand along the curve of the chair John had left clamped in the vise, and carefully inspected the insides of the drawers of the chest Dutch had finished that afternoon.

He took her into the packing-room where rows of crated furniture stood ready for shipping, and into the shed where the wood was stacked for curing. He spoke very little and she said nothing at all. At last there was nothing left to show her.

"Thank you," she said. But she did not move to go.

"Had supper?" he asked casually.

"Yes."

"Going home?"

"Yes."

"I'll walk along. Wait'll I lock up." He turned easily away from her, holding his breath. But she waited.

Lightly Amos took her arm (she did not withdraw it), and they walked across the millrace and into River Street. They passed The Saddler's. Rosa, working at the latch on the storm door, turned as they approached. She regarded them intently and then turned back to the latch.

"Evenin'," she said. Faith and Amos said, "Good evening."

They passed Lucius Parker on his way to The Saddler's. He stopped before them and his face, within its tortoise-like limitations, took on a look of cheerfulness. He removed his hat with a gesture that was, for Lucius, sweeping.

"Miss Goodbind," he said. "Good to see you. Good to see you, Amos. Good evening."

They returned his greetings, and after they had passed, Amos glanced back over his shoulder.

"Well—" he said. "Lucius was glad to see us."

Faith did not smile. She walked on, looking straight ahead with an expression on her face that made Amos think of something he had seen before, long ago and far from Two River, but he could not remember what it was.

They passed Eve Larch's house, and

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a large building built of corrugated steel and had large casement windows. It stood on a railroad siding. At the loading platform, men were loading crated furniture on to a freight car. I stood on the platform and watched them. Then I turned around because the superintendent was speaking to Ed Newpole.

"I had a lot of patience with Yekiti," the superintendent was saying. "He was lazy and always late. But we're short of help. He had a strong back and I was able to get some work out of him."

"What shift did he work?" Newpole asked.

"Mostly on the night shift."

"How many days a week would he work?"

"Average, two or three. Depended on how much money he needed for liquor."

I moved in closer. "Where did he eat his lunch, sir?" I asked.

The superintendent scratched his head. "He ate it here. He didn't go out."

Newpole looked at me, then at the superintendent. "Where in here?"

"Now I don't know. Back in a corner somewhere."

"By himself?"

"Always."

"Maybe he wanted to eat alone for a reason," Newpole said. "Maybe he had something hidden in there. Can you find out where he ate?"

"I'll ask the men," the superintendent said.

He went away. Captain Angsman and a Danford detective joined us. The superintendent came back and motioned to us. We went into the cool, dim interior of the building.

The superintendent stopped. "Here," he said. "This little bench in the corner. He'd sit here and eat his lunch."

I looked down and saw the small wooden bench. Behind the bench was a partition of boards. The boards came shoulder high. Above the boards, meshed chicken wire ran as high as the ceiling. There was an unpainted wooden door. It had a hasp and a brass padlock.

Newpole saw it, too. He said, "What's behind this door?"

"Damaged goods," the superintendent said. "Claim stuff. We store it there for the insurance adjusters."

"There's no use asking if Yekiti had a key?" Newpole said.

"Him?" the superintendent snorted. "No, sir. I've got the one key."

"It's only a padlock," Angsman said, examining it curiously. It can be opened with a hairpin."

"Let's take a look inside," Newpole said.

The superintendent took out a long key-chain. He fitted a key to the padlock. The door opened and we went in.

We found everything in a far corner of the room. There was an empty, upended plywood packing carton. Under it were two battered suitcases. Newpole opened the first one.

Wrapped in oily, soiled canvas was a set of burglar's tools. There were a saw, a jimmy, two Belgian nine-millimetre automatic pistols, and extra clips of ammunition. There was a large brown paper bag. In it were three grotesque Hallowe'en masks.

Newpole opened the other suitcase. There were six tall metal canisters. They were painted grey. The markings had been scraped off, showing slivers of shiny steel underneath. There was no .32-20 Colt revolver.

Angsman picked up one of the canisters and sniffed at it. "They look like Navy smokebombs," he said.

Newpole took the bomb from him and examined it. "What do you think, Charlie? You think they were planning a job at Staley Woollen?"

Captain Angsman pushed back his natty hat. "I don't know, Ed," he said in a puzzled voice. "Yekiti never held up anything bigger than a grocery store or a gas station. He was a crook who could strong-arm a few small shopkeepers and that's all. Where would he get an idea as big as this?"

"Manette Venus could have fed it to him," Newpole said. "Also, he's been in and out of State prison. A man can pick up an education in there."

"Maybe," Angsman said. "I guess it was an important enough job to him. Otherwise he wouldn't have killed his own girl-friend, Helen Toledo, to keep her from talking."

"We'll latch on to him," Angsman said. He has to show somewhere. A torpedo like him can't hole up forever."

Newpole nodded his head. Sure, he'll show. Soon he's going to need breathing room. In the meantime, we'll send these weapons to Bob Clyde. Maybe they've been used on other jobs."

We came outside. Newpole got into his sedan and waited for me to get in beside him. He grinned at me. "Well, maybe you hit it on the nose, son. I don't know if it was good logic, instinct, or plain luck. Or maybe all three."

He started up the car and we bumped over the railroad tracks. He said, "We'll keep looking for Yekiti. Which means there's not much else for you to do, Ralph. We'll run a check on Fulton Reece and Dolly Pine. I've already sent to the Chicago cops for some dope on the Fleers. And we've asked the New York cops to do a few chores." He smiled wryly. "So I guess that winds it up for you."

"I've had an education," I said.

"I'm glad," Newpole said. "You've got the makings of a good detective. In four years or so, you'll be eligible to take the exams for detective-lieutenant, won't you?"

"Yes," I said. "But I've got an idea I'll be staying in the uniformed branch."

"Sure," he said. "Sure. I kind of thought you'd keep it in the family."

AND so that evening I was back in uniform. I had had my arm dressed and I was sitting in the barracks dining-room having a cup of coffee with Captain Walsh.

Ed Newpole, who had been in the communications room, came in and poured himself a cup from the percolator. He said, "I phoned Reece and asked him to come by the barracks and have a talk with us."

"Now?" Walsh asked.

"Yes," Newpole said. "Reece is in tough shape, I guess. He's been acting so bad his attorney got him a continuance on the narcotics charge."

"I know it," Walsh said. "The Danford cops have a man watching him."

"Why?" Newpole asked.

"He might run," Walsh said.

"I'm afraid he's got no place to go," Newpole said.

"I'm not so sure," Walsh said.

Ray Beaupre, the duty sergeant, came into the dining-room. "Got a call from the Danford cops," he said. "They lost Reece."

Walsh stood up, he said angrily. "How?"

"They were tailing his car, Captain. They lost him in traffic. The last they saw he was heading west. Going fast."

Walsh said, "Get out a Signal Three to all cruisers in that sector. I want Reece picked up and brought in."

"Yes, sir," Beaupre said.

Walsh turned to Newpole. "I thought you said Reece wouldn't run?"

"I've been wrong before, Fred."

"Here's another thing," Walsh said. "Reece was in debt. He needed money for drugs. Also, he was the one who installed the security setup at Staley Woollen, and he'd know how to break it down. There are a lot of questions we have to ask him about Manette Venus and Yekiti."

"Which is why I asked Reece to come in here," Newpole said wearily.

The communications man came running out of his room and into the duty sergeant's office.

We pushed our chairs back and hurried into the office.

Ray Beaupre looked up from his night lamp. "A smash-up," he said tersely. "Went off the highway ten miles west in Claxton. I'm putting in an ambulance and doctor call."

"What's the licence number?" Newpole said.

Beaupre gave it. Newpole turned away, his face taut and inflexible. "It was Reece," he said to Walsh. "We'd better get out there, Ralph."

We raced in a patrol cruiser, siren screaming. I sat hunched forward over the wheel. Every time I swung the car around occasional traffic my left arm stabbed with pain.

Ahead of us at the bottom of a hill, we saw red flares on the road. I slowed the car. Now I could see the blinking red light of a cruiser on the shoulder of the highway. I stopped the car and we jumped out. There was a pall of smoke.

People milled around. We broke through them. The car was off the road, pushed into a thick-trunked, tall oak tree. The motor had splittered and disintegrated. The steel body of the car was crumpled like an accordion, the frame twisted and warped.

At the left side of the car, Phil Kerrigan, his face blackened and the front of his uniform smudged, tugged at the twisted door with a jack handle. Another trooper named Manny Green was playing a hand fire extinguisher on the front of the car. I moved close and through the shattered glass of the side window I saw Fulton Reece slumped over the steering wheel. Kerrigan strained on the jack handle and the door snapped open.

We dragged Fulton Reece out and laid him on the shoulder of the road. Kerrigan knelt down beside him. He pulled out a flashlight and lifted the eyelids. Then he closed them. He stood up and shook his head slowly.

"Anyway," Newpole said, "it was a good try."

Green had been pushing the crowd back. Now he came over. "Dead?" he asked.

"As soon as he hit, I think," Kerrigan said. He bent down and wiped his hands on a tuft of tall brown grass. "I can't understand it. Lieutenant. A tyre didn't go. It's almost like he turned off deliberately into the tree."

"Yes," Newpole said. "Now I think we'd better move everybody back. The gas tank is liable to go up."

. . . . . .

I reported to Captain Walsh's office the next morning. He was standing at the big wall map. He said, "The troop and all substations have searching patrols out in every direction." He turned away from the map and went back to his desk. "You've still got a bad arm, and I need a cruiser for traffic patrol."

"But I'm feeling fine, sir," I said. I could—"

"You'll patrol the turnpike east of Danford. Ten miles. That's all."

"Yes, sir," I said. I put on my cap and went out.

The traffic was light and the patrol card showed only a small stolen car

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list. There was a haze in the fields and the sun was pale and the air crisp and sharp. I drove along slowly on the far right side of the road. Ahead of me I saw the junction of Route 105. I pulled over and stopped the cruiser.

It wasn't a hunch or instinct this time, but cold reasoning. I was putting myself in Al Yekiti's position and thinking what I would do if I were he. He wouldn't go back to Danford after the killing. The Danford cops would be shaking down every hiding-place in town. He would head out. But if he headed out too far he would run into the State Police roadblocks. Perhaps he had gone around them. And perhaps he had not.

I decided to go off territory. I didn't cut off my radio, but I didn't call in and tell them, either. I turned on to Route 105 towards Bellfield. I went by the same farmhouses of a week ago, the same rocky fields and the gnarled apple trees.

I came to the narrow dirt road which led to Deer Pond. I turned the cruiser in, bouncing slowly over the ruts and rocks. A quarter of a mile before the pond I stopped in the middle of the road. I got out and walked up the hill. I cut through the trees to the edge of the clearing and stood behind a tall pine. Across the brown carpet of needles I could see the yellow Boothbay cottage. It was bleak and lifeless.

Beyond the cottage, the blue waters of Deer Pond sparkled in the October sun. There was no sign of human life. I went back to the road and continued on, following it as it wound around the pond. I searched the ground for tyre tracks. I watched both sides of the road for telltale signs in the underbrush.

I walked five hundred yards, six hundred. Then I saw something. There were brush marks on the dirt road as though somebody had swept there with branches. Then, on the right side, there were some matted broken weeds. They had been fluffed up, but the path they had made was about the width of a car.

I turned off the road. I pushed into the underbrush, the brambles scratching against my puttees. I opened the flap of my holster and loosened the long-barrelled revolver. I followed the path. I came upon some brown pine branches banked up high. I walked around them first. Then I moved in and began to pull them away. Hidden behind them was a car. It was Al Yekiti's black sedan.

I circled around the car, pulling away pine branches. There was a bullet hole through one side and another through one window.

I went back to the road and walked down, past the Boothbay cottage to my cruiser. I radioed Troop E Headquarters. When I was through I left the cruiser and went back up the road again. I stood behind a tree at the edge of the clearing and kept watch on the cottage.

I didn't hear the cruisers coming. The only way I knew was that a fine haze of dust began to drift above the trees below me. I went down the road to meet them.

They had parked the cars among the trees. There were six men, including Captain Walsh, Sergeant Beaupre and Corporal Arthur Sherman. The corporal carried a tear-gas gun. Manny Green held a Winchester rifle. Kerrigan and Ravelli had shotguns crooked under their armpits.

"Did you see anybody in the cottage?" Walsh asked me.

"No, sir," I said. "But their car isn't far. If Manette Venus knew about the cottage, then Yekiti would know, too."

"You didn't show yourself, did you?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Beaupre, we'll go up and reconnoitre. Lindsey, take a Thompson and come with us," Walsh directed.

Kerrigan reached into a cruiser and handed me a sub-machine gun. I went up the dirt road with Walsh and Beaupre. We came off the road, crouched down and crawled through the dry-smelling underbrush. We stopped at the edge of the clearing.

Walsh studied the yellow cottage. "No sign of life," he said, out of the corner of his mouth. "No smoke coming from the chimney."

"If you want me to go take a look—" Beaupre said.

"No," Walsh said. "It's possible they're in there. If they had a supply of food they wouldn't have to move for a while."

I spoke to him from my prone position. "I could go ahead and show myself, sir. Maybe I could draw their fire."

"You won't do anything of the kind," Walsh snapped. "Let's go back."

We crawled back to the road. We walked down and joined the others.

"We'll surround the cottage," Walsh said in a measured voice. "You'll use cover. Make sure you have a good thick tree trunk in front of you. And nobody does anything until he gets the signal. Beaupre, you'll distribute your three men. Corporal Sherman and Lindsey, you keep with me."

PALE blue tunics and dark blue breeches spanned out and melted away in the woods. Walsh looked at the intent face of Sherman, then at me. He took out his pocket watch and held it in his hand. We waited silently. He put the watch away and walked up the road again. Sherman and I followed him.

"Wait here," Walsh said. He stepped forward into the edge of the clearing and showed himself.

"Yekiti!" he called. "Calvaris! Horace! You're surrounded. Come out with your hands up."

There was no answer from the cottage. The wind sighed through the trees.

"Yekiti!" Walsh called out.

He waited for an answer. There was none. He came back to Sherman and me.

"Either they're not in there," he said, "or they're playing possum."

"I'll go take a look," Sherman said.

"Let's have no more of that," Walsh said quietly. "Lindsey, you cover me. I'm going down there."

He walked out. He started slowly for the cottage. He seemed small and forlorn out there by himself. I brought the Thompson up and wrapped the canvas thing tightly against my arm.

There was a tinkle of glass from the cottage. Three rapid pistol shots crackled in the still air. Walsh hit the ground face down. I fired a burst at the cottage with the Thompson. Then another. Walsh stood up and ran back, his short sturdy legs churning the ground.

"Rotten shots," he said, breathing heavily from behind his tree trunk. "And I'm no small target, either." He twisted his body around. "Okay, so they're in there." He cupped his hands and shouted, "Sergeant Beaupre! Give them a shotgun blast."

A second passed. There was the explosion of a shotgun, then two together. Then a fusillade. The cottage windows shattered.

There was a rapid answering fire from the cottage. I could hear the distinctive burp of a German Schmeisser machine-pistol. Now came the single shots of revolver fire and the high-powered whine of a repeating rifle.

"I'd like to take them alive," Walsh said soberly. "I don't care about Yekiti. He wouldn't talk anyway. But if Calvaris and Horace are in there we could get information from them."

Sherman was putting a tear-gas shell into his gun. He tested for wind direction. "Maybe those two want to surrender, sir. But they're afraid of Yekiti."

"It's worse for them this way," Walsh commented. "All this will do is get them killed."

A bullet pinged off the tree in front of Walsh. He squeezed his thick body back. "That was close," he said. He nodded to Corporal Sherman. "Give them a whiff of tear gas, Arthur."

The corporal lifted the short, fat-barrelled rifle and sighted it along a tree branch. He fired. The tear-gas shell arched through the air and hit the ground at the edge of the cottage. A grey cloud of smoke rose up.

"Another, Arthur," Walsh said. "Bring up your elevation."

Sherman fired again. The shell looped through the air, bounced on a window-sill, and dropped inside the cottage.

"Lucky," Sherman grinned.

"Good," Walsh said grimly. "Another. And bring it up a fraction more."

Sherman pushed another shell into the chamber and fired again. The shell lobbed through the air and through the jagged glass of the window. Smoke billowed out.

Walsh cupped his hands. "Beaupre! Hold your fire."

The firing died away. Among the trees there was a stillness. We waited. The smoke drifted away from the cottage. We could hear coughing from the troopers near the lake.

Suddenly the front door of the cottage opened and two men burst on to the porch. They were covering their eyes with their hands, but I recognised them as Calvaris and Horace. They felt around for the screened porch door, opened it, and stumbled down the stairs.

"This way!" Walsh called. "Here!"

They turned in the direction of his voice. They staggered like blind, drunken men.

Now a huge figure loomed in the doorway of the cottage. Yekiti came on to the porch with the machine-pistol in his hands. He coughed. He began to scream at Calvaris and Horace.

"Drop the gun!" Walsh called to him.

Calvaris and Horace ran, zigzagging over the ground. Yekiti didn't drop the gun. He fired through the screening of the porch, spraying bullets at the two running men. I saw puffs of dust as Horace was hit. He fell down, rolled over and lay still. Calvaris screamed and dropped to the ground. He began to crawl on his stomach, his hands pulling at tree roots.

I broke into the clearing and aimed the Thompson at Yekiti. It jumped in my hands. The porch screening shredded. Yekiti dropped his machine-pistol. He hit the screen door, tore it away from its hinges. He tumbled down the three steps to the ground.

Captain Walsh ran for him. I was close behind. At the porch stairs I looked down at Yekiti, not recognising him now in the gore and filth, the face shattered beyond a semblance of humanity.

"So that's the end of him," Walsh said. He pushed his revolver back into its flap holster.

The other troopers were now in the clearing. Phil Kerrigan was examining the dead body of Horace. Sergeant Beaupre was putting handcuffs on Dick

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Calvaris. Calvaris was crying hysterically. Walsh heard the crying.

"Beaupre," he said. "Maybe you'd better check and see if he was hit somewhere."

"Not a scratch on him," Beaupre said. "Calvaris is scared, that's all."

Walsh went up the stairs through the porch and into the cottage. I followed him. The remains of the tear-gas made me cough and splutter. My eyes smarted and tears gushed out of them. Walsh kept dabbing his eyes with a handkerchief.

There was a shambles of crockery. There were scattered, opened cans of food and rinds of fruit. Empty whisky bottles and empty beer cans. A litter of cigarette butts. The pine walls were pockmarked with bullet holes. There were a .30-30 Winchester rifle and a .45 Colt automatic pistol.

Corporal Sherman came in with Manny Green and Hank Ravelli. They searched the cottage systematically, from one end to the other. There was no .32-20 Colt.

I heard footsteps on the porch. Phil Kerrigan came in. Behind him was the slim form of Cole Boothbay. Boothbay walked up to Captain Walsh.

"You phoned me from the barracks earlier," Boothbay said. "You said something about criminals living here. Was that it?"

"That was it," Walsh said.

Boothbay stopped short and looked around with shocked eyes.

"Why did they pick my cottage?"

"They heard of it through Manette Venus," Walsh said. "It's one of those things."

"Look at this damage," Boothbay shouted. "Who's going to pay for it?"

Sergeant Beaupre said, "Maybe you can collect from the Yekiti estate."

"You're not being funny, are you?" Boothbay said sharply. "Some of this damage is due to the police."

"The sergeant was only joking," Walsh said. "If you want to make a claim to the Commonwealth, have your lawyer contact the attorney-general.

"By the way, Mr. Boothbay, is that your Winchester rifle there?"

"No," Boothbay said emphatically.

"The Colt automatic?"

"I never owned a weapon in my life." He craned his neck, looking at the kitchen. "They cleaned out my refrigerator, too."

Walsh said briskly, "Okay, Beaupre. We'll get back now."

. . . . .

They brought Calvaris from the cell-block and into the guardroom. Sergeant Stan Maleski sat him in a chair and gave him a cigarette. Then they ranged around him. Captain Walsh, Detective-Lieutenant Chet Granger, Captain Angsman, and the Danford Chief of Police. Kerrigan and I were there as door guards.

Granger was doing the interrogation. "What was the plan?" he asked Calvaris.

"We didn't have no plan no more," Calvaris said. "We had to beat it when Helen got knocked off."

"Why didn't you pull it anyway?"

"We couldn't get to our stuff in the warehouse. We figured we'd run into a stake-out."

"What was the original plan?" Granger asked.

"It was gonna be next Friday," Calvaris said, his sharp, unshaven face turning from one to the other. "The Staley Woollen Company. We had these funny masks and the smoke bombs and the guns. We wait until the armored truck drops the payroll and takes off. Then we go in."

"Who was to take the gate guard?" Granger asked.

"Me. They let me off first. I'm hanging around the gate like I'm looking for a job. Yekiti and Horace wait in the car down the road. I walk in and talk to the guard in the booth. Then I put the slug on him, tape him up, and dump him on the floor. The car comes up quick. I stay in the booth and keep the gate clear. Yekiti and Horace go in and hit the office."

"How?"

"Up the fire-escape. The fire door on the second floor is gonna be open for them."

"A pay-off?"

"Yeah. Yekiti got to some dame in the office. She'd take care of the door."

"Just one girl?"

"Yeah."

"Nobody else? A man named Reece?"

"No."

"What was the girl's name?"

Calvaris shook his head. "I don't know nothing about the inside set-up. Yekiti told us nothing about it."

"What was your cut in this?" Granger asked.

"Five grand."

"That all? The take was supposed to be two hundred grand."

"You're riding me," Calvaris said. "The take was gonna be about twenty-five big ones."

"Not twenty-five grand," Granger said. "Two hundred thousand."

"Yekiti wouldn't cross me," Calvaris said stubbornly.

ANGSMAN moved in. "How about the route, Dick?"

"Al's got it all taped. We already run the route maybe five, six times in Al's car. We got it down perfect."

"When did you plan to switch cars?" Granger asked.

"Two miles down Route Seven. There's a cut-off. Al's car is there. We get in it and go straight for the shack at Deer Pond. We stay there until the heat cools off. Then we split."

"You wouldn't go back to Danford?" Captain Angsman asked.

"Naw. We get paid off in the cottage. Then everybody splits up."

"What else?" Granger asked.

"That's all I know, Lieutenant."

"You're a liar, Dick," Granger said evenly. "Why did you kill Helen Toledo?"

"Me?" Calvaris asked with an injured look on his face. "I got nothing to do with that, Lieutenant."

Angsman said, "You were in the car when she was shot."

"So help me," Calvaris said earnestly. "I didn't know Al was gonna kill her."

"No?" Granger asked. "Then why were you waiting outside the hotel?"

"Al tells me there's a kid trooper who rides near the mill. He's supposed to be fixed. The fix fell through. Helen was supposed to set it up again. We wasn't gonna do nothing."

"You were waiting outside the hotel with a Schmeiser machine-pistol. You were going to do nothing?"

"No, no," Calvaris said frantically. "Not me. Al Yekiti had the burp gun. We were only waiting outside to see what's gonna happen. Then this kid comes out and he's holding on to Helen and she's crying. So we know Helen's been pinched."

"So you decided to kill her," Granger said.

"No, no," Calvaris pleaded. He looked up at Granger and tugged at his coat sleeve. "You got it wrong, Lieutenant. Al tells us if the kid gets Helen to the barracks, she'll talk, she'll spill the whole operation. He says he's gonna get her. I figure he means a snatch, nothing more. I'm behind the wheel of the car, motor running, ready to go. Then Al starts to shoot the burp gun. I'm screaming at him, 'What's the idea?' Then I gun the car and scram."

Granger asked: "What about Manette Venus?"

"I don't know nothing about her. Sure, I seen in the papers where some dame by that name got knocked off, but I never heard of her before."

"Didn't Yekiti ever mention Manette Venus to you?"

"No."

"You didn't know she was the girl planted inside the Staley office?"

"No. So help me. I didn't know nothing."

"Didn't Helen Toledo talk about Manette Venus?"

"Not to me."

"Did you ever hear of a State trooper named Ralph Lindsey?"

"I seen in the papers where he was mixed up with the Venus dame. But I don't know him."

"Didn't you know Lindsey was the trooper who had the patrol near the factory?"

"Yekiti didn't tell us no names. I once seen a cruiser go by there. But Al says not to worry. He's gonna get it fixed."

"Why did you pick the cottage at Deer Pond for the hideout?"

"We got to get off the road fast. The State cops would be watching everywhere."

"But why that cottage?"

"Yekiti says it's a laugh. The cottage belongs to a guy who works in the woollen company. After the job is pulled, the guy's gonna be busy like a one-armed paper hanger. He's gonna be so tied up with the cops and mill bosses, he's gonna have no chance of coming out there. Me, I think it's a good rib. Who's gonna think of looking for us there?"

"Did you know the name of the man who owned the cottage?"

"I seen his name in the shack. Bootmaker or something."

"Boothbay," Granger said. "Cole Boothbay."

"Yeah. Boothbay. I seen him there talking to the cops."

"And you never saw him before that?"

"No, sir. That was the first time."

Granger went over and huddled with Walsh, Angsman, and the Danford Chief of Police. He came back to Calvaris and said, "All right, you can go back to your cell. We'll talk to you later, when the D.A. gets here."

Sergeant Maleski, standing by, saw Granger nod. He took Calvaris by the arm and took him back to the cell-block.

"I'm not sure," he said, "If we have the whole story."

"You don't think Calvaris was telling the truth?"

"I think he was. He has to save his own neck. But we never found that twin Colt."

"Yekiti could have tossed it away."

"Maybe. But I'm still wondering where Pulton Reece fits in."

"He killed himself so he wouldn't be questioned further," I said. "I don't know of a stronger admission of guilt, sir—"

"Reece was sick in the head," Granger said. "He could have killed himself because he was tired of fighting the world." He stopped and thrust his hands deep into his pockets. "Then I'm not sure we have a true picture of Manette Venus, either. I've got a feeling she was pushed into this against her will."

"Yes," I said. "But how?"

"I don't know yet. But we'll find out. The girl started in the operation. Then she wanted to get out. Maybe because she met you."

"But she was supposed to meet me. That was part of their plan."

"But she wasn't supposed to fall in love with you. When that happened,

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she tried to take you out of it. When she couldn't get you to leave the job she was going to tell you everything. Remember she promised to?"

"Yes," I said slowly.

"They knew it. They had to kill her first. Didn't you know the girl fell in love with you?"

"I had an idea," I said. "But I wasn't sure."

"She wanted to go away with you, didn't she?"

"Yes, but I thought she wanted to get out of town, and she needed me for protection of some kind."

"I think she wanted to get you out of town, Ralph." He leaned against the wall. "It's too bad she didn't tell us sooner. We could have done something for her then."

"She wasn't a bad person," I said thoughtfully. I turned to him. "Was she bad, Lieutenant?"

He came away from the wall. "No," he said. "I think she got tangled up somewhere and couldn't get free."

After lunch I phoned my father in Cambridge. I asked about Ellen, and he said she was home. The Levesques had been in to see him, and there had been some tears, and, at least, he had been forgiven. I told him my day off was starting at five in the afternoon, but I had a short patrol to do first.

I was restless. I had a half-hour before I went on patrol. There was something gnawing inside me. The picture didn't fit, and all the ends weren't tied, and Lieutenant Granger knew it, too. I paced the empty guardroom. Then I went into the communications room and watched the teletype machines.

The dispatcher called me. "Weren't you working on the Venus case?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"There's a message here from New York police. Maybe you're interested."

I took the paper and looked at it. It was information on the Signet Crest Company. It reported that the firm was a mail-drop house. I took it and went into the duty office. I put it on Sergeant Maleski's desk. He read it.

"So what?" he said.

"What's a mail-drop house?"

"An address," Maleski said. "A hole in the wall. They charge so much a month. You have your mail sent there. They forward it to you wherever you are. They remail letters for you from their address."

"What's the purpose?"

"Some people want a New York address. They try to put up a front. They might be making phony deals and corresponding with people and they don't want anybody to know where they really are. A lot of phony stuff is pulled that way. Some of these mail drops are used by men on the run. Ex-cons and sharpshooters use them. A few of these outfits are crooked and they'll furnish you with any kind of job history and references you want. For a price, that is."

"Thanks," I said slowly.

I went out. So there it was. Everything. I knew it would be a matter of seconds before the teletype message was relayed to GHQ in Boston. It would be a matter of minutes before Ed Newpole saw it and began to move. And I knew I had to move first. I had got into it myself and I had to finish it myself—for my own peace of mind.

Because everything dovetailed now. The Staley Woollen holdup had been scheduled for next Friday and the plan was going through even after Manette Venus had been killed. Because someone else was still planted in the Staley Woollen office to open the fire door for Yekiti and his gang. And it was the person who had planned the entire thing. Not the slow-witted Al Yekiti, or the troubled, inadequate Fulton Reece. But Manette's ex-husband. A man named Andrew Fleer.

I ran down the corridor buckling on my service belt. At the door leading downstairs to the garage, I bumped into Phil Kerrigan coming in.

"Hi." He grinned. "What's the hurry, kid?"

"I've got a patrol," I said.

He looked at his wrist-watch. "You've got fifteen minutes yet, haven't you?"

"No. I've no time at all," I said. "I'll see you, Phil."

I ran out. I brought the cruiser around, turned on to the road and sped off towards Staleyville.

I drove in through the gate of the Staley Woollen Company, past the aged guard, and parked in front of the office building. I went inside. I was hoping he still felt safe and secure, that he was still there.

HE was. Cole Boothbay was sitting behind his desk. I went straight to the counter. He looked up and saw me. He rose and sauntered over.

"I've come to take you in, Fleer," I said to him.

His eyebrows came up. "Fleer? Who are you talking to?"

"You, Andrew Fleer. The husband of Margaret Fleer, Manette Venus, Margaret Venable. Take your pick."

He had a maddening, supercilious smile. "Take my pick? Take yourself out of here, Lindsey. I hardly knew the girl."

"You were married to her. Your real name is Andrew Fleer."

"Oh, is it? My name is Cole Boothbay. I've worked here a year. Check the record. Before that I was with Signet Crest five years. Pick up a phone and call them. They'll verify it."

"No good," I said. "Signet Crest is a mail-drop house. We'll have your prints and pictures from Chicago by telephoto in an hour. You going to quibble about something we'll know in an hour?"

Fleer looked down at the counter. He spread his hands flat. "You know," he said softly, "I think you mean it."

"Your name is Fleer, isn't it?"

He looked up with bright eyes. "Why get all excited, Lindsey? So what? I served my time in Illinois. You've got nothing on me."

"There was a conspiracy to commit armed robbery at Staley Woollen," I said. "I don't know how far back you planned it. Maybe when you first came here. You used to watch them bring in the payroll every Friday. It struck you that with a little help the job could be pulled. You needed a couple of dumb gunmen to take orders. And you bought the cottage at Deer Pond for a hideaway. But you needed a girl, too."

He laughed in my face. "Why would I need a girl?"

"You'd watch the road from the window every Friday morning. After the payroll truck left there'd be a State Police cruiser outside the gate. But each time the cruiser would come from a different direction. Someone had to get that trooper out of the way. Margaret could."

"That's fine logic," he said. "And how would I get hold of her? She divorced me. She left Chicago. How would I know where she was?"

"You found out. You trailed her to Cleveland, where she was living. It was easy. She wasn't a criminal. She didn't know how to cover her tracks well. Not like you could."

"But your're contradicting yourself," Fleer said. "If she wasn't a criminal, she wouldn't come in on any deal, wouldn't she?"

"She had no choice. There was a warrant still out against her for the first job you pulled. She didn't want to be sent back to Chicago."

"You think I threatened her with that?"

"Yes. You forced her to come in. Maybe you told her it was just this once, then you'd let her go."

"You think you've sized me up pretty good, don't you, Lindsey?"

I shook my head. "I haven't bothered to size you up at all, Fleer. You're a sharpshooter, an angle boy. You were even going to clip the gunmen who were doing the actual work."

"All I've heard so far," Fleer said, "is mention of a hold-up-to-be. No hold-up ever took place. So you have no evidence against me. No man can be arrested for thinking."

"For conspiracy he can," I said. "And also for murder. You knew Manette was going to expose the whole job. You went over to Glen Road and killed her."

"I had an idea somebody else killed her," he said distantly. His hands dropped behind the counter. "But they released Ellen Levesque. Why?"

"Because it was the wrong gun. There was another .32-20 Colt. There was a pair of them. Manette had one. You, her ex-husband, had the other."

"So you're here to arrest me for Margaret's murder, and you came alone. You're going to make a big grandstand play by bringing me in."

"Not a grandstand play," I said heavily. "A man can't pass the buck. He has to straighten out his own problems. This thing started with me. It has to finish with me. A man's got to live with himself a long time."

"How long are you going to live?" he asked gently. His hand came up from behind the counter. In it was the pearl-handled revolver. "Is this the gun you were looking for?" he asked.

"Yes," I said slowly.

"And what are you going to do about it, Lindsey?"

I did nothing. I said nothing. My hands hung limp. Fleer backed away from the counter, the gun pointed at me. The girls in the office began to squeal in terror. They were leaving their desks and huddling in the back of the room.

"I'd like to give it to you, Lindsey," he said between his teeth. "Here and now. So don't tempt me."

One girl behind him seemed stupefied. She had stood up at her desk, faltered, and was unable to move. Fleer reached out and grabbed her. She was a short, thin brunette with wide, panic-stricken eyes. Fleer held her wrist. He pulled her in front of him.

"Five minutes," he said to me in a squeezed voice. "I need five minutes to get away. If not, I'll kill her. And you know I'll kill her. Five minutes, Lindsey."

He backed up, pulling the girl with him. He brought the gun up and held the muzzle to the girl's neck. Fleer put his arm around her and held her up.

I began to edge for the counter gate. "Where can you go?" I asked him harshly.

"Five minutes," Fleer said, his voice taut. He kept backing. He half-dragged the girl as he moved for the fire door. I opened my holster flap and brought out the service revolver. I started to bring it up.

"I said I'd kill her," he said, soft-voiced. "Move away from the gate, Lindsey."

I backed away, the gun hanging loosely in my hand.

Fleer was up against the fire door

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now, the girl in front of him. He reached behind him, fumbled with the lock of the door, and opened it. He moved back on the fire-escape gingerly, feeling his way, dragging the girl with him. The door slammed shut.

I ran. I clattered down the front stairs and outside. I started for the rear of the building with my gun cocked. But around the edge of it, instead of Fleer, the girl's nylonled leg and skirt came into view. He was crouched behind her.

"Get back," he shouted at me. He saw the cruiser. He lifted his gun and fired at the front of it, the bullet whacking into the radiator. He moved along, shielding himself with the girl. There was a grey car parked twenty feet away. He opened the door and backed in crabwise. He dragged the girl in after him. He started the motor. The car swung around. The gate guard, who had heard the shot, was outside his office, looking with bewilderment. The grey convertible swept by him. As it went through the gate opening and turned on to the road I jumped for the cruiser.

I started it. I went through the gate and turned out after him. I had one hand on the wheel. The other hand was holding the radiophone. I called Troop E. I gave them the name, description, and registration number of his car. I told them he was travelling south on Route Seven, that he had kidnapped a girl, and that he was armed.

He was ahead of me a quarter of a mile by now. I pushed the gas pedal down to the floor. The cruiser bucked and raced forward. But his car was fast. I saw steam beginning to wreathe around the hood of the cruiser. There was a smell of heat. His bullet had done damage. The motor began to skip and the steam thickened. Globs of water were hitting the windshield. The cruiser was coughing, slowing, and falling back. We came to a hill and went over the crest of it. The distance was widening between us.

A half-mile straight ahead there was a route junction. I saw a pale blue cruiser move across it and block the road. The grey car slowed, swerved on to the dirt shoulder of the road, and skidded to a stop. The door opened and Fleer ran out. He slithered down the embankment. I drove up and jammed on the brakes. I was out of the car fast. I ran by the convertible, took one quick look, and saw the girl huddled in the front seat. I went over the embankment.

It was a field. The grass was high. I saw him running across it. I heard a siren whining in the distance. I stumbled through the high brown grass after him. He turned and fired twice at me. Haphazardly and frantically. His shots were wide.

He came to a stone wall, waist-high. He vaulted over it and disappeared. There he stayed. I moved up, my gun still by my side. His head bobbed up from behind the wall. He took two more shots at me and missed. He ducked again. I was walking slowly now. He was only ten feet away.

"You've got one round left," I called to him. "Use it."

There was no answer from him. I couldn't see him behind the wall. I moved the ten yards, came to the wall and stopped. I brought up my gun. My shoe was prodding the chinks of stone for a foothold.

"Hold it," Fleer shouted. "Don't Lindsey. See? I'm throwing away the gun. I'm unarmed." The pearl-handled revolver came twinkling over the wall and dropped at my feet. I kicked it away.

"Stand up," I said. "With your hands behind your head."

He stood up, breathing rapidly, his breath wheezing. His fingers were laced at the back of his head. I opened my handcuff case. I half-turned. On the road I saw two more cruisers parked. In the field, running towards us, were Hank Ravelli and Manny Green.

Ravelli came up first. He grabbed Fleer, twisted him around, and took the handcuffs from me. He locked Fleer's arms behind his back.

"You had a chance to shoot him," Ravelli said to me. "Manny and I were afraid you——"

"I know," I said bitterly. "And I was thinking about it too."

WHEN I drove home to Cambridge I saw a black car in front of our house. I knew it was Captain Walsh's. I came inside and kissed my mother.

"Where are they?" I asked.

"On the sun porch," my mother said. "Captain Walsh is discussing something with your father."

I went out there. They were looking at a page of notes. When my father saw me he put his pencil down. He said, "What do you think, Ralph? We're going to write a book."

"A book?" I asked. "What kind of a book, Pa?"

"A sort of history of the State Police," my father said. "It's going to keep me pretty busy. It was Captain Walsh's idea."

"A man needs a hobby," Walsh said. "And I don't know of anybody who's more qualified to do a history of the S.P."

"We can get a lot of stuff from the State archives," my father said. "In the old days," he continued reminiscently, "they called them the State Constabulary. They rode horses then."

"Which was before my time," Walsh said to me. "But when I get through next spring I can help your father with it."

"You, sir?" I said.

"Why not?" Walsh said. "I've only got a few more months to go. I might as well start planning now. I can do the leg work, and go out and interview all the old-timers. I'd enjoy that." He stopped and looked at his watch. "I have to go now." He went to the doorway. He turned. "I'll tell you right in front of him, Walt," he said to my father. "You've got a good boy. He'll make out fine. If he don't get court-martialled first, he'll end up as executive officer or captain-adjutant. You'll see."

I said, "Thank you, sir. I'm trying to make all my mistakes now."

"We never stop making mistakes," Walsh said. "But as long as they're honest ones we get by. While I'm here I might as well tell you, Ralph. You've got an extra day off. Don't report back until Saturday night."

"Thanks, sir," I said.

"Goodbye, Walt. I'll call you," said Walsh.

I looked at my father. There was a smile on his face. "What are you wasting time around here for? Ellen is home."

"Ellen doesn't want to see me."

"For a tough cop you're a lot of mush when it comes to girls. How do you know she doesn't want to see you?"

"She let me know, all right."

"Look, when I was courting your mother——" He stopped and shook his head. "No, no more stories. I just say a man doesn't know until he tries."

So I went over to Ellen's house. She answered the door herself. She was wearing a new dress with a flared skirt and her shoes had high heels.

"If I'm not welcome," I said, "you can shut the door quick."

She kept it open. "I was waiting for you," she said. "You've been home ten minutes. But it seems like hours since your car drove up."

"If I had known——" I started to say.

"Oh, there are so many things you don't know. You're the biggest dope in the world sometimes. Let's go for a walk."

She stepped outside. We went down the stairs and walked along the sidewalk. I scuffed at the leaves.

"I was over to your house before," she said. "I was talking to Captain Walsh. He's a real grizzly bear isn't he? And sensible, too. We were talking about how a man selects his company and how it shows his true character. Then we talked about Manette Venus. You still insist she wasn't a bad girl, don't you?"

"Yes," I said.

The breeze whipped at her black hair. She pushed a wisp away from her freckled little nose. "That Andrew Fleer," she said. "He married Manette when she was only eighteen. She'd never been away from Ames, Iowa. He brought her to Chicago. I'll bet anything she didn't know what he was doing when he tried that blackmail thing."

"Most likely not."

"After she divorced him, she ran away and hid in Cleveland under an assumed name. But she didn't know how to hide. He found her. He forced her to contact you to pick you up. I kept thinking what a sap you were to fall for it. But you weren't a sap. She was a nice girl, wasn't she?"

"Yes, but not as——"

"I know." She smiled. "You're going to say she wasn't as nice as me. She probably was, maybe nicer. You wouldn't know in such a short time. Anyway I'm sorry I was so thick-headed about it. Or would you call it bad-tempered?"

"Quick-tempered," I corrected. "And I like it on you. It's part of you and I'm used to it."

We went walking. She said, "Manette must have loved you a great deal. Perhaps I sensed it and that's why I was so jealous. But don't be too hard on me. I made plans to marry you a long, long time ago."

"Then as long as we're talking about it," I said, "let's follow through."

"That's what I was leading up to so subtly," she said, smiling mischievously. "But don't hand me generalities, trooper. I can be tough, too. Lay it on the line. When?"

"I don't know," I grinned. "I thought the girl usually set the date."

"Then you've made a deal," she said. "You'd better be ready in thirty days, morning suit, ring, best man, and all. Okay?"

"Okay."

She stopped. "Well?"

I stopped. "Well, what?"

She sighed. "At least," she said, "you could kiss me."

"I was thinking the same thing," I said. "But here? In the middle of the street?"

"Here," she said firmly. "So pucker up, trooper."

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